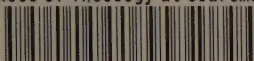


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A History of
The Revised Version
of the
New Testament

SAMUEL HEMPHILL, LITT. D.



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A HISTORY OF THE REVISED
VERSION OF THE NEW
TESTAMENT

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A History of the Revised Version of the New Testament

By

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LONDON

ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW

1906

7-29064

BUTLER & TANNER,
THE SELWOOD PRINTING WORKS,
FROME, AND LONDON.

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Preface

THIS little book appeals to no mere historical or literary interest. Its object is intensely practical. I want my readers to study what I must call the *glaring* incongruity between the Revised Version of the New Testament and the Revised Version of the Old Testament; and, when they have done so, to use their influence (for every one must have some influence) to get the New Testament, or AT LEAST THE GOSPELS revised over again on similar lines to those which the Old Testament Revisers followed; so that the Revised Bible as a whole may no longer remain heterogeneous, as it is at present, but may become homogeneous, and fit in all respects and for all purposes to supersede the Authorised Version. I appeal to the enlightened Christian public to bring pressure to bear upon the owners of the copyright, as they are the only people who stand in the way of a re-revision. A disastrous mistake was made at the inception of this work. The two Testaments were divorced after many centuries of union, and mark what then happened. The New Testament was revised by one set of men, who on radical principles made *as many changes as possible* during ten years and a half (1870-81); and came out separately on

May 17, 1881. The Old Testament was revised by quite another set of men, who on conservative principles *made as few changes as possible* during fifteen years (1870-85); and did not attain to the dignity of a separate publication at all, but found itself reunited with the New Testament; and the two together made their somewhat belated appearance (in 1885) as the Revised Bible.

But that is not all. After the publication of the Revised New Testament it was subjected to the ordeal of perhaps the most searching criticism in the whole history of literature, and that too by scholars of the greatest eminence: and so many detrimental alterations were pointed out that some of the ablest of its own authors got frightened, and suggested that a further revision should take place in a conservative direction. But that eminently reasonable suggestion was never to this day carried out.

Having been a student of this subject ever since the memorable 17th of May, 1881, I am convinced that the errors of judgment committed, first, in allowing the two Testaments to be revised on different principles; and, secondly, in not withdrawing from circulation the critically damaged, and therefore to some extent discredited, Revision of the New Testament, while as yet there was time, before the completed Bible came out, must be rectified; and that the work of Revision must be done over again, *at least in the Gospels*, on the same principles that found favour with the Old Testament Revisers. Then at length we shall have a satisfactory substitute for the Authorised Version,

to read in the public services of religion, to give as a *premium* to our Sunday School children, and to recommend and distribute in the homes of rich and poor alike.

But, as things are at present, whatever be the debt we owe to the Revisers of the New Testament, for the light they have let in upon Christian eschatology, and for the logical *nexus* of St. Paul's Epistles, which they have so successfully exhibited, I must yet sorrowfully maintain that their work is essentially inferior to that of the Old Testament Revisers, and utterly unworthy to displace our greatest English Classic.

CHAPTER I

THE ANTIQUITY AND CHARM OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE

THE history of the English Bible is an exceedingly long one, reaching back to the times of the Plantagenet kings Edward the Third and Richard the Second. It was begun in the reign of the former and published in that of the latter. Chaucer, the father of English literature, was the contemporary of our first Bible-translators. So also were Gower and the sweet Italian Petrarch. Our English Bible then, in its earliest completed shape, belonged to a time of strenuous deeds and melodious writings. But I am concerned now merely with its antiquity. It was published about five hundred and twenty years ago, thus antedating the Reformation by a century and a half. This is more than some critics are ready to admit. For instance, the New Testament Revisers, by an extraordinary misreading of history, and fortified with a sublime indifference to the duty of verifying their statement, assert in their Preface that "the foundation was laid by William Tyndal." No doubt he was the first to translate the *original* Greek of the New Testament into English, but it is certain that in doing so he followed the broad

general lines of the Wiclif translation ¹ from the Latin Vulgate, which he is found to have corrected, transposed, and otherwise retouched in the freest and most exuberant fashion.² I am indeed aware that Tyndal claimed to have been an original translator, and, no doubt, that claim influenced the Revisers' minds. But his claim does not really stand the test of careful comparison and collation, which, indeed, on the contrary, demonstrate to the scholarly eye that he must have had the Wiclif version, the common Bible of the ploughmen of England, in his mind and memory, even if he had it not on the desk before him; and that he had neither the wish nor the power to shake himself free from its associations, when he sat down to his laborious and now famous task of writing for the press a pioneer version of the original Greek. So that, in translating the Bible into our vernacular, Tyndal was consciously or unconsciously revising the quaint old English of one hundred and forty years before: and what he did informally to the Wiclif Bible subsequent labourers formally did to his own. That is to say, they thoroughly revised his version, and their revisions were themselves in turn revised more than once afterwards. But, let it be distinctly remembered that, although the process of revising the English Bible has occurred five or six times during its long life-history of half a millennium while the language was being fused,

¹ I do not tie myself to the belief that the *New Testament* was necessarily the work of Wiclif himself.

² "The influence of Wycliffe upon Tyndale is too palpable to be mistaken."—Marsh, *Lectures on the English Language*, p. 446.

the version had, in its Jacobean form of A.D. 1611, enjoyed an unbroken and undisturbed rest of no less than two hundred and sixty years, before it fell into the hands of the revisionists of A.D. 1870. It had thus remained intact during twelve reigns in English history. It had seen eight generations of Englishmen come and go. Shakespeare, Raleigh, and Bacon were still alive for some years after the 1611 Revision was published. Spenser had been dead only a dozen years. Milton was a child of three. George Herbert, Joseph Hall, Jeremy Taylor, Isaac Walton, Edward Hyde, Thomas Fuller, and Sir Thomas Browne were, like Milton, amongst those who were young enough to have been influenced by its language. It was no longer a new book in the stirring days of the Protector Oliver. Thus the finishing touches had been given to the English Bible in the very midst of *the golden era of our literature*, and by men who were the contemporaries of our most imperishable writers. So that it is small wonder that the intrinsic superiority of this Jacobean revision enabled it to outdistance all competitors, and to come down to our own day with universal acceptance as the fittest which had alone survived. Edited the last time under the auspices of a despotic king, it soon became the companion of the simple democracy, and the instructor of the ignorant masses. It accompanied the early English colonists to the vast continent beyond the Atlantic; and there, as a torch kindled from heaven, spread the benign light of the Gospel far and near. No other printed book has ever existed in so many editions; none other has been circulated

in such gigantic numbers, or has been so often translated into other tongues, so widely quoted, so plentifully expounded, so largely committed to memory, or so universally loved. Its influence, educational and spiritual, has been incalculably enormous. It has fixed the language and determined the religion of the Anglo-Saxon peoples. It has been an unchanging element amid their social and political evolution, and their world-embracing expansion. It has been a potent factor in bringing about whatever of commanding position they have at this moment amongst the nations of the earth.

Nor is it true that the English Bible of 1611 has now in any large sense grown antiquated. Partaking as it does of the literary greatness of the age in which it reached its present form, it could no more become obsolete than Shakespeare himself : though, like him, tinged with a certain archaic flavour. No doubt it is not in the common diction of the nineteenth century, but neither is it in that of the seventeenth.³ It enshrined within itself a traditional religious diction removed from vulgarity yet intelligible to the vulgar. It was always refined and dignified. It was neither colloquial on the one hand, nor stilted on the other ; and therefore was never likely to go out of fashion. It caught the English language at its best, photographed, and stereotyped it. Hence some of the most illustrious of English stylists have been amongst its most enthusiastic admirers.

³ Marsh, *Lectures*, xxviii. *passim*.

That great orator Edmund Burke ⁴ :—

“ frequently employed the impressive phrases of the Holy Scriptures, affording a signal illustration of the truth, that he neglects the most valuable repository of rhetoric in the English language who has not well studied the English Bible.”

Matthew Arnold declares of the translator of Homer that ⁵ :—

“ he will find one English book and one only, where, as in the *Iliad* itself, perfect plainness of speech is allied with perfect nobleness ; and that book is the Bible.”

His brother Sir Edwin Arnold says ⁶ :—

“ I owe my education as a writer more to the Bible than to any other hundred books that could be named. It is, together with the classics, the grandest possible school of style, letting alone all that it must ever be on the moral and spiritual side.”

George Saintsbury says ⁷ :—

“ The plays of Shakespeare and the English Bible are, and will ever be, the twin monuments not merely of their own period, but of the perfection of English, the complete expressions of the literary capacities of the language.”

George Marsh the learned American calls it ⁸ —

“ the highest exemplar of purity and beauty of language existing in our speech.”

E. J. Payne, *Burke, Select Works*, vol. i. xxxv.

⁵ *On translating Homer*, popular ed. p. 89.

⁶ Cited in *The Witness*, Aug. 28, 1903.

⁷ *Hist. of Elizabethan Literature*, chap. vi.

⁸ *Lectures on the Eng. Lang.* p. 441.

The historian John Richard Green says ⁹ ;—

“As a mere literary monument, the English version of the Bible remains the noblest example of the English tongue, while its perpetual use made it, from the instant of its appearance, the standard of our language.”

John Ruskin touchingly remarks ¹⁰ :—

“My mother forced me, by steady daily toil, to learn long chapters of the Bible by heart, and to that discipline . . . I owe . . . the best part of my taste in literature.”

And again ¹¹ ;—

“I have next with deeper gratitude to chronicle what I owed to my mother for the resolutely consistent lessons which so exercised me in the Scriptures as to make every word of them familiar to my ear in habitual music.”

The judgment of Alfred Tennyson, that prince amongst men, is thus recorded ¹² ,—

“The Bible ought to be read, were it only for the sake of the grand English in which it is written, an education in itself.”

Turning now to a few Theologians who were also stylists, Bishop Middleton, that famous scholar of a bygone age said of the English Bible ¹³ :—

“It is simple ; it is harmonious ; it is energetic ; and, which is of no small importance, use has made it familiar, and time has rendered it sacred.”

⁹ *Hist. of the English People*, bk. vii. chap. i. Some of these extracts are from Cook, *The Bible and English Prose Style* (Heath, Boston).

¹⁰ *Praeterita*, chap. i.

¹¹ *Ibid.* chap. ii.

¹² *Memoir*, by his son, p. 258, note.

¹³ *Life of John Jebb*, ii., 456.

The honied hymn-writer, Frederick William Faber, in an appreciation which has become hackneyed by quotation (or *misquotation* !), eulogises “the uncommon beauty and marvellous English” of our Bible ¹⁴ :—

“It lives on the ear like a music that can never be forgotten, like the sound of church bells, which the convert hardly knows how he can forego. Its felicities often seem to be almost things rather than mere words. It is part of the national mind, and the anchor of national seriousness. Nay, it is worshipped with a positive idolatry, in extenuation of whose grotesque fanaticism its intrinsic beauty pleads availingly with the man of letters and the scholar. The memory of the dead passes into it. The potent traditions of childhood are stereotyped in its verses. The power of all the griefs and trials of a man is hidden beneath its words. It is the representative of his best moments ; and all that there has been about him of soft, and gentle, and pure, and penitent, and good, speaks to him for ever out of his English Bible. It is his sacred thing which doubt has never dimmed and controversy never soiled. It has been to him all along as the silent, but O how intelligible voice of his guardian angel ; and in the length and breadth of the land there is not a Protestant, with one spark of religiousness about him, whose spiritual biography is not in his Saxon Bible.”

The poetical Richard Chenevix Trench praises ¹⁵ “the rhythmic beauty of the periods, the instinctive art with which the style rises and falls with its subject, the skilful surmounting of difficulties the most real, the diligence and success with which almost all which was best in preceding translations has been in it retained and embodied ; the constant solemnity and seriousness which, by some nameless skill, is made to rest upon all.”

¹⁴ Quoted in the *Dublin Review* for June, 1853, p. 466.

¹⁵ *On the Auth. Version*, p. 6.

Finally, the Revisers of 1870-81 in their Preface say collectively :—

“ We have had to study this great Version carefully and minutely, line by line ; and the longer we have been engaged upon it the more we have learned to admire its simplicity, its dignity, its power, its happy turns of expression, its general accuracy, and, we must not fail to add, the music of its cadences, and the felicities of its rhythm.”

And, later on, they call it ;—

“ a Version which has held the highest place in the classical literature of our language.”

Such is the great Version, or rather Revision, which is to celebrate its Tercentenary five years hence, and the beginnings of which, like those of a mighty river, lie hidden far up in the higher moors and table-lands of our literary history. In spite of all that has ever been said in detraction from its accuracy by objectors who, in the expressive phrase of Trench, have armed their eyes with microscopes, it is still in practice a potent instrument for the conversion to God of the English-speaking peoples, and for their advancement in holiness ; nor can any one go far wrong who is a devout, sympathetic, and prayerful student of its pages. We have just noticed the fascination which it has exercised on the minds of the best literary critics ; but, thankful as we are for that testimony, there is a still surer witness. St. Paul tells us that the Scriptures (meaning doubtless the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament current in his day) are “ profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction,

for instruction which is in righteousness : that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work " ; and that high eulogy applies with equal force and appropriateness to our common English Bible. More accurate and, at the same time, more elegant than either the Septuagint of the Eastern Church or the Vulgate of the Western, it is read and studied by an immensely larger number of the dwellers in this world than either of those its famous forerunners. It belongs to an expanding and perhaps cosmopolitan language. It is the prized and loved companion of the choicest spirits amongst those many millions who inhabit our widely-scattered Empire and the great Republic across the Ocean, and has for over two centuries bound Churchmen and Nonconformists into one compact and solid brotherhood of Bible-readers. Where in the history of the world's literature could such another phenomenal success be found ? Or what instrument of mental and spiritual enlightenment has the wit of man ever devised which could for one moment dispute the palm with the charming religious phraseology of our common English Bible ?

CHAPTER II

STUDIED MODERATION OF THE ADVOCATES OF REVISION

HAVING said so much already about the general fidelity and felicity of the English Bible in the form in which it left the hands of King James's revisers, I must now caution the reader that no translation, or revision of a translation, ever was or ever will be perfect. Absolute accuracy in all minute particulars is not attainable, especially in a work of such large compass. Moreover, the revisers of 1611 hint very plainly in their preface that they did not aim so much at grammatical and etymological nicety, as at enshrining in idiomatic English the sense and spirit of the Hebrew and Greek originals. They tried to make historians, prophets, poets, apostles and evangelists speak in plain and chaste English, free on the one hand from rhetorical licence, and on the other from artificial restraint. Their object, in short, was to give Englishmen a perfectly natural rendering of the Scriptures. But in doing this they were morally certain to retain multitudes of the translational inaccuracies of their predecessors, as well as to introduce numerous others of their own. That there are plenty of errors therefore in the Old and New Testaments as they were edited in 1611 is only what might have been expected, and we have no wish to minimise these. The occurrence of such errors, even in very considerable numbers, is quite

compatible with all that has hitherto been said in praise of the English Bible. Nor must we forget that our language has outgrown many words and phrases current in 1611, which have therefore to be classed as archaisms ; nor, finally, that the texts of the Hebrew and Greek originals are now capable of being more certainly restored than they were in King James' day ; partly through the discovery of Manuscripts then unknown, and partly through the progress of the science of textual criticism.

It was inevitable, therefore, that the call for a fresh Revision would be heard sooner or later. Indeed, isolated scholars here and there did call for it at various times even in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries ;¹ but it was only about eighty years ago that the idea began to take shape in any tangible form, and even then only in a very tentative manner. The learned John Jebb, Bishop of Limerick, with prophetic foresight writes to a correspondent in the year 1829² :—

“ I deeply regret that you should, in however modified a sense, and with whatever cautionary feeling of attendant dangers, be favourable to a revision of our English Bible. That it has errors and imperfections I most readily admit ; what human performance is exempt from them ? But I humbly conceive that, in the present days of unsettlement and appetency after change, the only safety lies in keeping things as they are. We have not hitherto indeed had any great encouragement from the revisionary labours even of our first scholars and divines. Looking around me in the present day, I see

¹ On the bibliography of this subject consult the list of forty publications carefully compiled by R. C. Trench. *On the Authorized Version*, pp. 216-219.

² *Life of John Jebb*, ii., 454.

much to fear, and little to hope ; for one trifling error corrected I doubt we should have ten worse introduced ; while, in point of style, from everything that has appeared of late years, I am obliged to think, we should be infinitely losers. I, then, for one, am content to bear with the few ills I know, rather than encounter thousands that I know not of. But, in truth, with all its errors, ours is the best version I have seen, or hope to see. Let individuals give new versions, . . . the more the better ; but in days of epidemic quackery, let our authorised version be kept inviolate, and guarded as the apple of our eye."

We now confine our attention exclusively to the New Testament, and trace concisely the progress of the revision-idea as applied to it. Three years after Jebb's prophecy already quoted, the Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge, James Scholefield, published (1832) *Hints for an improved translation of the New Testament*, the object of which was to "attempt something towards carrying a little nearer to perfection a work which is already so near it." In a second edition of his pamphlet (1836) Scholefield, evidently feeling the force of public opinion, drew back from the idea of a new Translation, and urged merely the correction of "occasional inaccuracies," which he estimated at something over five hundred. Fourteen years later a third edition of this pamphlet was published (1850). Six years later (1856) another Cambridge Professor, William Selwyn, published a pamphlet ³ in which, alluding to Scholefield's estimate, he exclaims :—

"Who shall say that *an hundred* proved and acknowledged errors in the English Version are not of sufficient

³ *Notes on the proposed amendment of the A. V.*, pp. 35 and 39.

importance to justify the undertaking of an Authorized Revision ? ”

and predicts that—

“ the pillars and arches, the walls and buttresses of the sacred fabric will remain the same as at present, while the joints are pointed, and the blemishes removed ” ;
and further remarks that ⁴ :—

“ It is a work upon which we may imagine the spirits of our forefathers, who have laboured on the vernacular versions during the last thousand years—Bede, Wiclif, Tyndale, Coverdale, and the noble band of A.D. 1611—looking down with satisfaction and joy.”

Animated by these ideals Canon Selwyn brought the matter before the Southern Convocation on February 1, 1856, and failed, a motion in favour of appointing a Royal Commission having been already made in Parliament in the preceding session by Mr. James Heywood ⁵ and withdrawn after the briefest discussion, in which it became evident that the Government as represented by Sir George Grey would have nothing to do with it. But, although the Government and Convocation both refused to touch Revision, the ventilation of the subject in those assemblies aroused the attention of the public, and supplied a fruitful topic to reviewers and journalists.⁶ Several volumes in furtherance of the same design also appeared at this time. One was a revised version of the *Gospel according to St. John*, by five clergymen ⁷ (1857) :

⁴ Ibid. p. 9.

⁵ See Hansard (3rd Series), cxliii., p. 1221-26.

⁶ See Ellicott, *On the Revision of the English Testament*, p. 6, note 1 ; also p. 2, notes 1 and 2.

⁷ Dr. Barrow, George Moberly, Henry Alford, W. G. Humphrey and C. J. Ellicott.

which was followed by the *Epistles to the Romans and Corinthians* (1858), and by those to the *Galatians, Ephesians* and *Philippians* (1861). These private ventures were known only to a select few, yet still they were not without influence, as we shall presently see. There appeared also a very able book by the Dean of Westminster, Dr. R. C. Trench (1858), from which several passages deserve to be quoted ⁸ :—

“ It is clear that the question, Are we, or are we not, to have a new translation of Scripture ? or rather,—since few would propose this who did not wish to lift anchor and loosen from its moorings the whole religious life of the English people,—Shall we, or shall we not, have a new revision of the Authorized Version ? is one which is presenting itself more and more familiarly to the minds of men. This, indeed, is not by any means the first time that this question has been earnestly discussed ; but that which distinguishes the present agitation of the matter from preceding ones is, that on all former occasions the subject was only debated among scholars and divines, and awoke no interest in circles beyond them. The present is apparently the first occasion on which it has taken serious hold of the popular mind.”

Trench then went on to speak of this as “ a question affecting . . . profoundly the whole moral and spiritual life of the English people,” and of the “ vast and solemn issues depending on it,” and proceeded :—

“ I will not . . . pretend that my own mind is entirely in equilibrium on the subject. On the whole, I am persuaded that a revision ought to come ; I am convinced that it will come. Not, however, let us trust, as yet ; for we are not as yet in any respect prepared for it ; the Greek (I mean that special Hellenistic Greek here re-

⁸ *On the A. V.*, pp. 1-4.

quired), this, and the English no less, which would be needful to bring this work to a successful end, might, it is to be feared, be wanting alike."

And then, after discussing in his own masterly way, in more than two hundred pages, the various emendations which he judged to be necessary, he suggested that a body of Christian scholars, including some from outside the Church of England, "eschewing all luxury of emendation, abstaining from all which is not of primary necessity," should "draw out a list" of proposed changes, and "express their sense of the desirableness that these should at some future day be introduced into the received text," and, "having done this, let them leave these emendations to ripen in the public mind, gradually to commend themselves to all students of God's holy Word": and "probably before very long" there would be "a general desire for their admission into the text. . . . All abrupt changes would thus be avoided—all forcing of alterations on those not as yet prepared to receive them."⁹

In such cautious and judicious manner was the project of New Testament revision discussed during the dozen years from 1858 to 1870; nor can it be too distinctly or too emphatically affirmed that the reluctance of the public could never have been overcome but for *the studious moderation and apparently rigid conservatism which the advocates of revision were careful to adopt*. Had there not been that studious moderation and that apparently rigid conservatism, the Christian public of England would have continued irreconcilably and perhaps

⁹ p. 212.

even indignantly opposed to the undertaking; so that even the most ardent reformers were obliged by the force of public opinion to confine their proposals to the mere removal of sporadic errors, thus leaving the old English Bible to all intents and purposes in its integrity, or at least with its rhythmical and sonorous diction not appreciably altered. Indeed Trench was by no means alone in his opinion that the composition of such noble English as that which had come down from the age of Spenser, Bacon, and Shakespeare, was a lost art, and that no body of theologians or others, whether in England or in America, would be competent to undertake so delicate a task. And, as to the great bulk of Christian Englishmen, they would much rather have appointed a committee to rewrite their Shakespeare than their venerated and beloved Bible. It was therefore no easy task to persuade people in general to extend even ordinary toleration to any attempt, however conservative, to improve on the great work of 1611; and it may truthfully be said that literary men, other than theologians, almost without exception frowned on the enterprise.

Nevertheless in 1870 it came about, unexpectedly enough, under the following circumstances.

One of the "five clergymen" who (1857-61) had, under the influence of Winer's *Grammar of the New Testament*,¹⁰ published tentative revisions of certain books, as already recorded, was Charles J. Ellicott, an industrious and suggestive commentator, and a faithful bishop of the English Church. For many years he had been, like his friend Alford, a

¹⁰ See Ellicott, *Addresses on the R.V.*, p. 8.

most earnest advocate of revision, and two of his services to that cause require special mention. In 1870 he published a book on the *Revision of the English Version of the New Testament*, which is still replete with interest, and had then a very considerable influence and a very steadying effect on the public mind. Profoundly conscious of the thorny nature of the subject, and of the harm that would be done by outrunning public expectation, as to the extent to which the revising process would be carried, he set himself to reassure people in general on that essential and cardinal point. He admitted that the proposed revision could become popular only by exhibiting "a sensitive regard for the diction and tone" ¹¹ of the Authorised Version; on which he enlarged in generous language:—

"The happy elasticity of diction, and the thoroughly idiomatic tone of our English Version—that which, in fact, so commends it to the heart as well as to the head of the earnest reader, is just that which will be found wanting in all recent revisions."

He emphasised "the wise and leading principle of minimized alteration and guarded change," ¹² remembering "the deep conservatism in the English mind," ¹³ and predicting "that no revision in the present day could hope to meet with an hour's acceptance if it failed to preserve the tone, rhythm, and diction, of the present Authorized Version." ¹⁴ He dwelt on the fact that "to countless thousands the *English Bible* is the *Book of Life*"; and asked "Are we to have no sympathy for this large class?" ¹⁵ He warned the future revisers against

¹¹ pp. 54 and 15.

¹² p. 95.

¹³ p. 97.

¹⁴ p. 99.

¹⁵ p. 104.

“over-correction,” “over-pressing,” “mechanical uniformity,” “innovation,” and efforts to “improve”;¹⁶ and summed up the matter thus :—

“The question will really turn on the amount and nature of the changes. If they are few and good, they will be accepted ; if not, they will not meet with acceptance either at home or abroad.”¹⁷ “The really *monumental* character of our Version is its best protection against progressive change, and this protection, we cannot help feeling persuaded, as long as England is England, will be always found available and sufficient.”¹⁸

But Ellicott's services to the cause of revision did not end with the publication of his books. He also succeeded in making a convert of that most versatile and picturesque personality in the English Church, Samuel Wilberforce, the silver-tongued Bishop of Oxford. This remarkable man by “his tact, his sagacity, and his energy had recovered for Convocation, one after another, its ancient privileges”; he it was who had “quickened it into life, activity and usefulness, after its long slumber of more than one hundred years”; and he was all along “its moving spring.”¹⁹ What wonder therefore if, in the assembly to which he had virtually given a new lease of life, his word was law? What wonder if any cause which he might condescend to champion was sure to march steadily on to victory? When Ellicott captured the persuasive Wilberforce he captured Convocation, and revision suddenly came within the sphere of practical politics.

¹⁶ pp. 105, 112, 119, 211, 219.

¹⁷ p. 199.

¹⁸ p. 200.

¹⁹ *Death and Life, a Sermon on the death of S. Wilberforce*, by E. Bickersteth, Prolocutor, etc. (July 27, 1873).

CHAPTER III

THE INAUGURATION

ON February 10, 1870, in the Upper House of the Convocation of Canterbury, Bishop Wilberforce proposed and Bishop Ellicott seconded—

“ That a Committee of both Houses be appointed, with power to confer with any Committee that may be appointed by the Convocation of the Northern Province, to report upon the desirableness of a revision of the Authorised Version of the New Testament, whether by marginal notes or otherwise, in all those passages where PLAIN AND CLEAR ERRORS,¹ whether in the Greek Text originally adopted by the translators, or in the translation made from the same, shall, on due investigation, be found to exist.”

An amendment to include the Old Testament was accepted, and the resolution passed unanimously. Next day it passed the Lower House, and a committee was appointed of eight of the Upper and sixteen of the Lower House. This committee having received no favourable response from the Northern Convocation, which kept entirely aloof from the project,² held a meeting on March 24.

¹ The small capitals in this and other quotations are mine.

² See *Guardian* for March 2, 1870. The Northerners urged (1) that the time was not favourable for revision; and (2) that the risk was greater than the probable gain. Moulton, *Hist. of the English Bible*, p. 216.

and agreed on its report in the form of the five following resolutions ³ :—

“ 1. That it is desirable that a revision of the Authorised Version of the Holy Scriptures be undertaken.

“ 2. That the revision be so conducted as to comprise both marginal renderings and such emendations as it may be found NECESSARY to insert in the text of the Authorised Version.

“ 3. That in the above resolutions we do not contemplate any new translation of the Bible, or any alteration of the language, except where in the judgment of the most competent scholars such change is NECESSARY.

“ 4. That in such NECESSARY changes the style of the language employed in the existing version be closely followed.

“ 5. That it is desirable that Convocation should nominate a body of its own members to undertake the work of revision, who shall be at liberty to invite the co-operation of any eminent for scholarship, to whatever nation or religious body they may belong.”

At the next meeting of Convocation, on May 3, the Report consisting of the above five resolutions was presented to the Upper House by Dr. Wilberforce, and unanimously adopted: and the following resolution was also carried unanimously on the motion of the same proposer :—

“ That a Committee be now appointed to consider and report to Convocation a scheme of revision *on the principles laid down in the Report now adopted*, and that the Bishops of Winchester, St. David's, Llandaff, Gloucester and Bristol, Salisbury, Ely, Lincoln, and Bath and Wells, be members of the Committee. That

³ It is really almost waste of space to print rules which never were kept. The *Historical Account* (p. 8) says that they were drafted by Bishop Ellicott.

the Committee be empowered to invite the co-operation of those whom they may judge fit from their Biblical Scholarship to aid them in their work."

In the above resolution the words "to consider and report to Convocation a scheme of revision" might conveniently be paraphrased by two words "to revise," for that is the meaning of the clause.

Thus an immense stride in the direction of revision had been taken by the Bishops, and the matter came, on May 5 and 6, before the Lower House, on the proposal of Canon Selwyn, where it was accorded a hearty but not unanimous support. The Lower House also agreed to waive its right to have a double proportion of representatives on the committee, and rested content with eight. The first meeting of this joint committee of sixteen revisers was held on May 25, when three important matters were settled:—

First, the division of the Committee itself into two sections, the one to be the *nucleus* of a Company for the New Testament, and the other to be the *nucleus* of a Company for the Old Testament. Secondly, the drawing up of rules for the revision; and Thirdly, the selection of scholars to coagulate round each of the two *nuclei* and turn them into full and complete "Companies."

(a) The *nucleus* of the New Testament Company consisted of the Bishops of Winchester (Wilberforce), Gloucester and Bristol (Ellicott), and Salisbury (Moberly), the Prolocutor (Bickersteth), the Deans of Canterbury (Alford), and Westminster

(Stanley), and Canon (afterwards Dean) J. W. Blakesley.

(b) The following were the rules adopted :—

“ 1. To introduce AS FEW ALTERATIONS AS POSSIBLE into the text ⁴ of the Authorised Version CONSISTENTLY WITH FAITHFULNESS.

“ 2. To limit, as far as possible, the expression of such alterations to the language of the Authorised and earlier English Versions.

“ 3. Each Company to go twice over the portion to be revised, once provisionally, the second time finally, and on principles of voting as hereinafter is provided.

“ 4. That the Text to be adopted be that for which the evidence is DECIDEDLY PREPONDERATING; and that when the Text so adopted differs from that from which the Authorised Version was made, the alteration be indicated in the margin.

“ 5. To make or retain no change in the Text on the second final revision by each Company, except *two-thirds* of those present approve of the same, but on the first revision to decide by simple majorities.

“ 6. In every case of proposed alteration that may have given rise to discussion, to defer the voting thereupon till the next Meeting, whensoever the same shall be required by one-third of those present at the Meeting, such intended vote to be announced in the notice for the next Meeting.

“ 7. To revise the headings of chapters and pages, paragraphs, italics, and punctuation.

“ 8. To refer, on the part of each Company, when considered desirable, to Divines, Scholars, and Literary Men, whether at home or abroad, for their opinions.”

(c) Thirdly, a list of names was drawn up with a view to invitations being issued for the New Testament Company; Dr. Ellicott acting as a kind of informal Convener, he having previously received advice from Drs. Gotch and Moulton in the

⁴ Notice the ambiguous use of the word “text.” In Rule I it = the English, whereas in Rule 4 it = the Greek.

selection of eminent Nonconformists.⁵ The full list of those invited is as follows⁶ :—

The Archbishop of Dublin (Trench) ; Dr. Joseph Angus, President of the Baptist College, Regent's Park ; Dr. John Eadie, Professor of Biblical Literature and Exegesis to the United Presbyterian Church, Scotland ; Dr. F. J. A. Hort, afterwards Hulsean Professor of Divinity, Cambridge ; Prebendary W. G. Humphrey, of St. Paul's ; Canon Benjamin Hall Kennedy, Regius Professor of Greek, Cambridge ; The Archdeacon of Dublin (W. Lee, D.D.) ; Dr. J. B. Lightfoot, afterwards Bishop of Durham ; Dr. W. Milligan, Professor of Divinity, Aberdeen ; Dr. W. F. Moulton, Professor of Classics, Wesleyan College, Richmond ; Very Rev. Dr. J. H. Newman, afterwards Cardinal ; Dr. S. Newth, Principal, New College, London ; Dr. Alexander Roberts, Professor of Humanity, St. Andrews ; Dr. G. Vance Smith, Principal of a Unitarian College, Carmarthen ; Dr. R. Scott, Master of Balliol College, Oxford, afterwards Dean of Rochester ; Prebendary F. H. A. Scrivener ; Dr. S. P. Tregelles ; Dr. C. J. Vaughan, Master of the Temple, and Dean of Llandaff ; and Canon B. F. Westcott, Regius Professor of Divinity, Cambridge, afterwards Bishop of Durham.

Of the above, J. H. Newman declined, as was to have been expected, and S. P. Tregelles through illness was never able to attend ; all the other seventeen within a few weeks had accepted the

⁵ See Ellicott, *Addresses on the Revised Version* (1901) p. 25.

⁶ See Moulton, *Hist. of the English Bible*, p. 218.

invitation, and were co-opted to form, with the *nucleus* of eight already mentioned, a Company of twenty-five members.

Thus we see that three great questions had been faced and settled; that a revision of the New Testament should take place; how it was to be done; and who were to do it. As Benjamin Hall Kennedy put it, "the hour had struck, and the men were ready."⁷

Yet all had not gone quite smoothly. As Dean Plumptre afterwards remarked at the Newcastle Church Congress:—

"At one time, indeed, there seemed to be the risk of a reaction. Even some of those who had been foremost in urging this comprehensiveness recoiled at what was its logical and legitimate conclusion."

The reference is to the co-option of the Unitarian Minister, G. Vance Smith, which was proposed and strenuously urged by Dean Stanley, and about which there was a sharp division of opinion and of voting at the Meeting of the Committee of Selection, the co-option being carried by only one vote,⁸ and one of those who voted for Mr. Smith afterwards declaring that had he known that that Theologian was a Unitarian he would not have supported his co-option for such a purpose.⁹ Wilberforce was not present at these proceedings, nor did he appear, though appointed Chairman of the Company, on the historic occasion of the first meeting which took place in the Jerusalem Chamber

⁷ *Ely Lectures on the R.V. of the N. T.*, p. 7.

⁸ *Life of Bp. Wilberforce*, iii., 351, note.

⁹ *The Revised N. T.*, by John Page Hopps, p. 7.

of Westminster Abbey on June 22; nor at the Celebration of Holy Communion in Henry the Seventh's Chapel, which, on Professor Westcott's suggestion, immediately preceded that first meeting, and to which Stanley had invited all the revisers, including Mr. Vance Smith. There was undoubtedly an error somewhere, for what Dr. Hort describes as "one of the great services of one's life; very quiet, but singularly impressive,"¹⁰ soon was made the subject of the most regrettable newspaper controversy, and aroused much protest amongst Churchmen during the next two years. Indeed "the storm that ensued was so violent that the Revision was almost wrecked at the very outset."¹¹ Into the merits of that unfortunate controversy I have no intention of entering, as the mere narrator has nothing to do with the theology of the question; but the whole matter assumes an intensely practical importance when we recollect the effect which it had in depriving the Company of the great prestige and, what was of even more moment, the strong restraining influence of its Chairman, Bishop Wilberforce; who, as we have seen, had placed himself at the head of the movement for revision at the psychological moment, piloting the resolutions as no one else could have done successfully through Convocation, where his influence was almost omnipotent; and being in himself a kind of personified guarantee to the public at large that revision would not be overdone. But, after all the energy that he had ex-

¹⁰ *Life*, ii., 135.

¹¹ *Life of B. F. Westcott*, by his son, vol. i., p. 392.

pended and the interest that he had manifested in the early stages of the movement, he ended by being present at only one meeting of the Company (on July 14), and that for only a couple of hours. Yet he did not formally resign, but continued to be a nominal reviser till his tragic death about three years after. Various reasons have been assigned for his absence. His biographer writes that it was "owing to the enormous pressure of work forced upon him by the Diocese" [Winchester] "over which he then presided."¹² An anonymous writer in *The Times* newspaper,¹³ evidently a reviser, says :—

"The titular chairman, Bishop Wilberforce, attended once for about a couple of hours ; but it became, even in that time, apparent to the Company, and perhaps was so to the Bishop himself, that a little lighter hand and looser rein were required to guide the Company pleasantly through the intricacies of criticism and scholarship in which they were almost hourly finding themselves involved."

But, two days after this his only appearance, he wrote to his intimate friend Henry Parry Liddon as follows :—

"What can be done in this most miserable business ? My own conviction is *nothing*,—and that I should only increase the evil by my own distinct and, as I find on every side, thoroughly apprehended disclaimer of all fellowship with the mischief."¹⁴

But we have a still plainer letter, though not in

¹² *Life*, iii. 350.

¹³ May 17, 1881. The passage is reproduced, word for word, in the *Historical Account of the Work of the American Committee of Revision* (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1885), p. 9.

¹⁴ *Life*, iii. 351.

his own biography, which contains these significant words :—

“ I have done all that I could—I never attend the Company because of the Socinian’s presence.” ¹⁵

Such, then, was the real reason of the absence of Samuel Wilberforce from the Jerusalem Chamber, but, though unwilling to compromise himself, he would not allow his hand to be forced by those whose ambition it was to discount the Revisionist movement from the very outset ; he therefore spared the crushing blow which he might have delivered by a public withdrawal, and contented himself with proposing a motion in Convocation. This led to nothing practical, and the Revision was not affected except in so far as it lost Wilberforce himself. I suppose Dr. Lightfoot (April 3, 1871) to refer to this where he says :—

“ Meanwhile, however, other dangers from an unforeseen quarter have threatened the progress of the Revision ; but these are now happily averted.” ¹⁶

On the death of Samuel Wilberforce in July, 1873, by a fall from his horse, Edwin Palmer, Professor of Latin at Oxford, ¹⁷ was co-opted. Three others had previously been co-opted, the Bishop of St. Andrews (Charles Wordsworth) ; Dr. David Brown, Professor of Divinity and Principal, Free Church College, Aberdeen ; and the Dean of Ely (Charles Merivale), who, however, resigned in 1871. Henry Alford died about half a year after the inauguration, and John Eadie about six years after-

¹⁵ *Life of Dean Burgon*, ii. 66.

¹⁶ *On a Fresh Revision of the N.T.*, p. vii.

¹⁷ He was afterwards Archdeacon of Oxford.

wards. These were the only changes in the New Testament Company during its lengthened existence.

It may be well here to give a sketch of the routine of the Company.¹⁸ The revisers met every month except August and September, for four consecutive days, beginning at eleven and ending at six. After prayer was offered by the Chairman, and the minutes had been read by the Secretary (Rev. Dr. Troutbeck),¹⁹ correspondence, if any, was gone through; after which the work of revision proceeded as follows. The Chairman used to read a passage from the Authorised Version, and to ask for any proposals as to change, first textual, and afterwards translational; and, as each reviser had previously been supplied with a printed sheet containing the portion of the Authorised Version to be revised at that particular session, (such sheet having wide margins, the right for translational and the left for textual changes, which were to be made beforehand by the reviser in private study), he was supposed to be ready to enter at once into the discussion of the portion. After full discussion, the vote of the Company was taken, and A BARE MAJORITY DECIDED whether any change should be made in the Authorised Version. Thus the New Testament was provisionally revised; but there was a rule that such provisional revision would, on being gone over again, require a two-thirds' majority to make it final. If any reviser was unable to attend a particular meeting he was supposed to send his corrections to the Chairman

¹⁸ Chiefly from Samuel Newth, *On Bible Revision*.

¹⁹ Troutbeck ought to have saved the Company from all danger of *discord*!

by post. "It was a rule acted upon throughout that the work done in the Jerusalem Chamber, as well as the opinions expressed by the members, with the results arrived at, and the grounds on which changes were either made or left unmade, should all be considered 'private and confidential.' " ²⁰ Samuel Newth thus describes the order in which the revisers usually sat at the table in the Jerusalem Chamber; and I have appended to each the number of his attendances out of a *maximum* of 407.

<div>Archdeacon Lee (283)</div> <div>Dean Stanley (253)</div>		Dr. Hort (362)	Prebendary Humphrey (385)
		Archdeacon Palmer (255)	Dean Blakesley (297)
		Dr. Roberts (94)	Bp. Wordsworth (109)
		Dr. Angus (199)	Bp. Moberly (121)
		Prof. Kennedy (165)	Dean Bickersteth (352)
		<i>Dr. Troutbeck,</i> <i>Secretary</i>	Bp. Ellicott (405) <i>Chairman</i>
		Dr. Vance Smith (245)	Dean Alford (16)
		Prebendary Scrivener (399)	Archbp. Trench (63)
		Dr. Lightfoot (290)	Principal Brown (209)
		Dean Scott (337)	Dean Vaughan (302)
		Dr. Newth (373)	Dr. Eadie (135)
			Prof. Westcott (304)
		<div>Dr. Moulton (275)</div> <div>Dr. Milligan (182)</div>	

²⁰ G. Vance Smith in *Nineteenth Century*, June, 1881.

Only two other particulars require to be chronicled here, the provision of funds, and the co-operation of the Americans. The former was for some time an anxiety. Newth says ²¹ :—

“So many persons could not come together from various parts of the kingdom—some very distant, including the extreme north of Scotland, and the extreme west of Cornwall—and remain in London for a week in every month, without a considerable expenditure of money. It was also found necessary for the satisfactory execution of the work that each portion, from time to time as provisionally completed, should be set up in type, and in this way further expenses were entailed. The question of meeting these expenses was at an early period forced upon the attention of the Company; for some members before many months had elapsed had been put to serious costs, and while all willingly gave their time and labour, as far as they might be able, without reserve to this important work, it was felt to be impossible to allow this extra burden to rest upon any, and the more so as the pressure of it must needs be very unequally distributed. An appeal to the public for help having met with no adequate response, it was resolved to dispose of the copyright of the work, in the hope thereby of obtaining sufficient means of meeting the expenses of completing it. Several offers from different sources were made to the Companies; but ultimately, for various reasons, it was deemed best to accede to that made by the University Presses of Oxford and Cambridge.”

This matter was finally arranged on December 10, 1872, and it appears that the purchasers of the copyright spent the very large sum of £20,833 on the personal expenses of the revisers.²²

²¹ p. 126.

²² See Schaff's *Companion to the Greek Testament and English Version*, p. 402. I assume that this sum (\$100,000) covers the expenses of both Old and New Testaments.

The idea of American co-operation was first entertained in a speech by Lord Alwyne Compton, on July 7, 1870, in the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury. Next month Dr. Joseph Angus was commissioned by Bishop Ellicott to confer with Dr. Philip Schaff in America on a plan of action. Schaff shortly afterwards drew up a plan of co-operation, and suggested a list of names. Meanwhile, at the triennial convention held in Baltimore, October, 1871, the American House of Bishops, to the disappointment of the English Committee,²³ declined Wilberforce's invitation (August 7, 1871) to join in the work. Eventually Schaff's nominations and his plan of action were accepted by the English revisers, and the American Committee, including Bishop Lee of Delaware, began work on October 4, 1872, after receiving from England the first Revision of the Synoptic Gospels.²⁴ There were, however, business negotiations, sometimes of extreme delicacy, extending over several years more. Eventually, on August 3, 1877, an agreement was concluded on the following lines :—

“ The English Revisers promise to send confidentially their Revision in its various stages to the American Revisers, to take all the American suggestions into special consideration before the conclusion of their labours, to furnish them before publication with copies of the Revision in its final form, and to allow them to present, in an Appendix to the Revised Scriptures, all

²³ *Historical Account*, p. 37.

²⁴ “ The English Companies revising, and the American Committees reviewing what was thus revised.”—*Historical Account*, p. 10.

the remaining differences of reading and rendering of importance, which the English Committee should decline to adopt ; while, on the other hand, the American Revisers pledge themselves to give their moral support to the Authorised editions of the University Presses, with a view to their freest circulation within the United States, and not to issue an edition of their own for a term of fourteen years." ²⁵

As to the expenses of the American revisers I may add the following from Dr. Schaff's *Companion* :—

"The funds for the necessary expenses of travelling, printing, room-rent, books, and clerical aid were cheerfully contributed by liberal donors, who received in return a handsome inscribed memorial copy of the first and best University edition of the Revised Version. The financial management was in the hands of well-known Christian laymen of New York. Their final account forms a part of the *Documentary History* which was printed for the use of the Revisers in 1885." ²⁶

²⁵ Schaff, *Companion*, p. 400 ; Ellicott, *Addresses*, pp. 37-42. The Americans published their standard edition, 1901. (Thomas Nelson & Sons, New York.)

²⁶ p. 396.

CHAPTER IV

SETTLING THE GREEK TEXT

HAVING lost Dr. Wilberforce the Company was henceforth under the guidance of Dr. Ellicott, who was present 405 days out of a possible 407—a marvellous record of perseverance in well-doing, carried over the lengthened period of ten years and a half. In order to understand something of the difficulty of his position, it is necessary to remember the large size of the Company, and that it consisted of very diverse elements; so much so that, while it is the fact that amongst the revisers as Christian gentlemen perfect harmony and brotherly concord prevailed throughout,¹ as is attested by Messrs. Hort,² Moberly,³ Wordsworth,⁴ Lightfoot,⁵ Humphrey,⁶ and Dr. Ellicott⁷ himself, there were yet, from the very outset, two opposite and almost irreconcilable ideals represented, both in criticism and in scholarship, one of which, as

¹ As to the American Committee the *Historical Account* says (p. 50): "It is a satisfaction to all the revisers in the retrospect, to know that there was from the beginning to the close of their labours, a constant and delightful exhibition of Christian unity."

² Hort's *Life*, vol. ii., under dates July 7 and 19, 1870.

³ *Memoir of Moulton*, p. 104.

⁴ *Episcopate of Charles Wordsworth*, p. 213.

⁵ *On a Fresh Revision*, p. 194.

⁶ *A Word on the R.V.*, p. 8.

⁷ Speech in Convocation, May 17, 1881.

might have been foreseen, quickly gained the upper hand, and dominated the entire proceedings. We are all familiar with the fact (some of us with only too good reason) that Bills in Parliament are subject to the liability of being considerably, or even fundamentally, modified, after their principle has been affirmed on the Second Reading. This happens at the Committee-stage, when they are minutely examined, and persistently discussed, and even fought over, line by line; when the hasty acceptance of some cleverly drafted amendment may entirely alter the scope of the measure; and when strong-minded, persistent, punctual, and vigilant members usually carry their point, sometimes by a snap division. Not very different was the passing of the New Testament Revision through Committee. The principle of revision having been affirmed by Convocation, in the five fundamental resolutions, and the detailed rules having been drawn up, not without looseness and ambiguity⁸ (though this was unintentional), by the *nucleus* of revisers appointed by Convocation, the working out of those principles and rules was unreservedly entrusted to the uncontrolled discretion of the Company itself, which, as already described, had received a large accession of co-opted members, none of whom had had any share in defining the principles or in drawing up the rules, while some of them even entertained the strongest possible dislike to them.

⁸ "The Rules though liberal are vague, and the interpretation of them will depend upon decided action at first."
—B. F. Westcott's letter to J. B. Lightfoot, June 4, 1870.
See *Life and Letters of Westcott*, vol. i. p. 391.

Consider, for instance, Hort's letter to Lightfoot, dated May 30, 1870 ⁹ —

“ A very good and characteristic letter from Westcott, who evidently knows no more than I do. He had had a similar invitation—he feels very much as I have done ; does not like the plan, but thinks it very much better than might have been expected, and believes we ought to seize the opportunity, and do what we can, especially as ‘ we three ’ are on the list.”

Westcott's letter is dated May 29, 1870, and contains these sentences ¹⁰ :—

“ I feel that as ‘ we three ’ are together it would be wrong not to make the best of it as Lightfoot says—though I dislike the scheme, I seem to be quite clear that we should embrace the opportunity and do our best.”

Seeing then that there were sections and groups amongst the revisers, even from the very first, it could hardly be a matter for surprise if the Chairman were soon to find himself swept by the cross-fire of contending ideals. Nor would it have been in the power of even the most determined Chairman, without risking secessions through a seemingly arbitrary use of his authority, to confine revision within the limits which had been somewhat mechanically prescribed. As well might a river swollen by copious rains be expected to confine itself within its narrow channel. Dr. Ellicott had, as we have seen, just brought out a valuable book full of sound advice to the public and to the revisers. On the former it must undoubtedly have had a somewhat soothing and reassuring effect ; inasmuch

⁹ Hort's *Life*.

¹⁰ Westcott's *Life*, i. 390.

as it was supposed to mark the extreme limit to which revision could possibly go ; but, as to the latter, was it really in the power of the author of that book, even when he found himself installed in the President's chair, to secure that his advice would be strictly followed ? Or, even supposing that he had force enough to accomplish this, was he personally, as a scholar and a reviser, to be debarred from modifying or even completely altering his views, during that unexpectedly long period of ten years and a half, in which he, as well as others, was daily learning by actual experience of the work as it progressed ? ¹¹

At all events, the Company, having once for all been set going on its course, travelled faster and farther than the public or even the Chairman had expected. The ball having been set rolling could not be stopped by any power in that Jerusalem Chamber ¹²; and a strong and united group of Progressives quickly manifested the determination to impress their principles, their ideals, and, it may be added, their personalities, fully upon the work. Their motto was "thorough" ; ¹³ their goal

¹¹ See his *Addresses on the R.V.*, p. 114. Westcott writes to Hort, July 7, 1870: "The Bishop of Gloucester seems to me to be quite capable of accepting heartily and adopting personally a THOROUGH scheme."—*Life of Westcott*, i. 393.

¹² "In revision, as in many other things, there is a continually accelerative and intensifying tendency which increased habitude in the work never fails to develop,—but which certainly must be closely watched, and constantly corrected."—Ellicott, *On the Revision of the English Testament*, p. 18.

¹³ See what is said by Newth, Lightfoot, Humphrey, and Palmer, as quoted below in chap. v.

was minute and detailed perfection in the textual and grammatical departments; and no consideration for the wishes of the outside public, if they ever seriously thought about feeling the throbbings of the public pulse at all,¹⁴ could deflect them by one hair's-breadth from the effort to reach that goal. Deaf to the pleadings and remonstrances of the Conservatives, who fondly hoped to confine the Company to the work of removing "plain and clear errors," and passionately prophesied that the Revision, if overdone, would be a public failure, these zealous and "fearless"¹⁵ men pressed for an entire reconstruction of the Greek text on modern critical principles, and for an exact literalism in the rendering of every word of it: and having, perhaps through the Chairman's weakness,¹⁶ scored an initial advantage, they vigilantly maintained it to the very end. Endowed with a robust belief in their own principles, occupying the *ex-cathedra* point of view of the college lecture-room,¹⁷ and persuaded that a word-for-word version being the fittest would survive, they gave a new direction and an unlooked-for impress to the entire Revision. Apparently regarding the fundamental rules as "weak and beggarly elements," they "pressed on unto perfection." A new type of text

¹⁴ Palmer, see below, p. 70.

¹⁵ The word is applied to Hort by Stanley (Article in *The Times*, July 20, 1881); and is used of the Revisers generally by Palmer (*Report of Newcastle Church Congress*, 1881, p. 485).

¹⁶ *The Episcopate of Charles Wordsworth*, p. 213.

¹⁷ G. Salmon, *Some Criticism of the Text of the N.T.*, p. 42.

was incidentally and in passing elaborated, and, what was scarcely less serious, a new standard of "faithfulness" in translating was set up.

I must now give some account of the remarkably able and zealous Progressives who led this revisionary vanguard. Foremost amongst them was Professor Hort, an erudite and accomplished Irishman, who filled one of the Divinity chairs at Cambridge. Though unknown to the public at this time, he had in his University earned the reputation of being a singularly precise and industrious student. For many years he had been toiling at a critical edition of the Greek Testament in collaboration with Professor Westcott, and both these able scholars were the intimate friends and colleagues of Professor Lightfoot, then chiefly famous for his luminous Commentaries on St. Paul's Epistles, and the author of perhaps the best manual ¹⁸ on the revision of the English New Testament which had appeared. These three men—"the Cambridge Trio," as they were called ¹⁹—proved the strongest group amongst the Revisers, and indelibly stamped the Revision with their own individuality from the very outset. Hort and Westcott, in the letters already quoted, use the expression "we three," which is significant of unity of purpose, and similarity of method. And amongst the disciples or converts of the Cambridge Three was the junior

¹⁸ *On a Fresh Revision of the English New Testament* (Macmillan).

¹⁹ Salmon (p. 9) calls them "the great triumvirate." Arthur Westcott, in his *Life* of his father, calls them "the Cambridge Trio," i. 390.

member of the whole Company, W. F. Moulton, the editor of Winer's *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, who was also a Cambridge man, and of whom we are told that "in textual criticism he clung to the oldest documentary evidence even more strictly than his friend Dr. Hort."²⁰ And Moulton in turn tells us that William Milligan was a "progressive,"²¹ and that he "was perhaps, next to these" [Hort, Westcott, and Lightfoot] "the chief advocate of the same general principles of criticism."²² In short, the three Cambridge Divinity Professors and their trusty henchmen, Moulton and Milligan, bore a share in revision that can only be described as "preponderating,"²³ which is equivalent to saying that the proceedings of the Company, if it had not comprised these members, would have been of an entirely different character. Nor is it difficult to understand that many of their less resolute and decided colleagues must often have been completely carried off their feet by the persuasiveness, resourcefulness, and zeal of Hort, backed by the great prestige of Lightfoot, the popular Canon of St. Paul's, and the quiet determination of Westcott, who set his face as a flint. In fact it can hardly be doubted that Hort's was the strongest will of the whole Company, and his

²⁰ *Memoir* of William F. Moulton, p. 193.

²¹ *Ibid.* p. 189.

²² Hort's *Life*, ii. 237.

²³ Yet Scrivener says—*Criticism of the N.T.*, vol. ii. p. 284, note 2—"they had a real influence, though, as a comparison of their text with that adopted by the Revisionists might easily have shown, by no means a preponderating one."

adroitness in debate was only equalled by his pertinacity. His biographer tells us that in the textual criticism of the New Testament "he knew that he had acquired such knowledge as was accessible, and he therefore expressed his opinions with no false humility."²⁴ And his tenacity of purpose is shown in the following couple of extracts from his letters to his wife²⁵ : —

"July 25, 1871. We have had some stiff battles to-day in Revision, though without any ill feeling, and usually with good success. But I more than ever felt how impossible it would be for me to absent myself."

And,—

"October 13, 1871. I dare not be away from Revision after former experience of the necessity for both speaking and voting incessantly."²⁶

Let us now turn to Westcott. His confidence in his own view of textual criticism was fairly complete. He writes²⁷ :—

"September 10, 1881. I often wish that I could be as certain of other things, of interpretation for example, as of text."

And²⁸—

"March 22, 1886. I should be the last to rate highly textual criticism; but it is a little gift which from school days seemed to be committed to me."

But in his letters to his wife he does not show quite as great tenacity of purpose as we have seen in the similar letters of Dr. Hort. For instance²⁹ :—

²⁴ Vol. ii. p. 242. ²⁵ See his *Life*.

²⁶ "In spite of fluctuations, there was a stable element in the Company which greatly helped in keeping up its traditions and principles."—*Historical Account*, p. 14.

²⁷ *Life*, i. 403. ²⁸ *Life*, ii. 84. ²⁹ *Life*, i. 396.

"May 24, 1871. We have had hard fighting during these last two days and a battle-royal is announced for to-morrow."

"January 27, 1875. Our work yesterday was positively distressing—however, I shall try to keep heart to-day, and if we fail again I think that I shall fly, utterly despairing of the work."

Same date.³⁰ "To-day our work has been a little better—only a little, but just enough to be endurable."

There is more to the same effect, but perhaps enough has been quoted to show the determined spirit which actuated these two Revisers, and it may easily be imagined what a powerful effect their fighting qualities of fearless confidence and incessant tenacity would have upon "the great majority" who, in the words of one of them, "had never made" textual criticism "a subject of special study."³¹ Moreover, it was well known that Hort and Westcott had been working for many years at an edition of the Greek Testament (an edition which, when at length it was published, was found to have been compiled on most radical principles); and, not only so, but these two Revisers were in the habit of entrusting privately the proof sheets of their forthcoming text to the other members of the Company, and were punctually present at the meetings, where they could expound and enforce the principles on which that text rested, as well as contend for the particular readings of the text itself; a text, be it always remembered, which had never been even seen by the public, nor subjected to the ordeal of independent criticism, inasmuch as it was not published till the very day

³⁰ *Life*, i. 397.

³¹ *Memoir* of David Brown, p. 227.

on which *the Revised Version* came out. Dr. Sanday says of this that "it was evidently no accidental coincidence."³² But, be that as it may, if that text and its underlying principles had been thoroughly sifted by discussion, as they were afterwards, the Revisers, as we now know, and as indeed the Chairman himself practically admitted,³³ would have seen reason to distrust many of their own conclusions; but, as it was, they completely overlooked the fact that it had not been subjected to any criticism whatever; and they took the surely too venturesome step of adopting it on the recommendation of its naturally fond parents. It is true that Ellicott³⁴ tries to minimise the amount of influence which Westcott and Hort exercised on their colleagues, and says that he personally made very little use of the booklets which they privately issued from time to time; but he does not profess to speak for the other members, of whom Benjamin Hall Kennedy, one of the greatest classical teachers of the nineteenth century,³⁵ admits that "the assistance thus supplied was indeed invaluable."³⁶ But, whatever individual members of the Company may have said on one side or the other, the stubborn fact remains that Ellicott himself mentions sixty-four passages of the Greek Testament in which the Revisers made changes in the *textus receptus* which were not supported

³² *Expositor* for October, 1881.

³³ See below, pp. 56, 135, 136.

³⁴ *Addresses*, p. 57.

³⁵ See *Dict. of National Biography*, s.v. B. H. KENNEDY.

³⁶ *Ely Lectures*, p. 46.

by any one of the great critical editors, Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Tregelles, but were in conformity with the results arrived at by Westcott and Hort,³⁷ in whose hands the "pruning-knife cut deeper" than in those of any of the aforesaid editors.³⁸ That is certainly a point of the utmost significance, as showing the great influence which Westcott and Hort exercised on their colleagues. For let it be remembered that Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Tregelles had hitherto led the advanced guard of textual criticism, and had been censured for their multitudinous departures from the traditional text by no less a person than the Chairman himself.³⁹ Yet here we find, on the Chairman's own admission, that in no fewer than sixty-four instances the Revisers outdistanced Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Tregelles in their revolt from the traditional text; and that, in those identical sixty-four instances, Westcott and Hort, their fellow-workers, had previously done precisely the same on the proof-sheets which they had communicated to the Company. Surely this amounts to almost a demonstration that the Revisers were following the guidance of the Cambridge editors, who were constantly at their elbow, and whose edition, still *in embryo*, contained those sixty-four new departures. Indeed several Revisers have in plain English confessed that in textual matters they did follow the guidance

³⁷ *Addresses*, p. 59.

³⁸ *Sunday School Times* of Philadelphia for November 5, 1881, quoted by Kennedy, p. 161.

³⁹ *On the Revision of the English Testament*, pp. 46-49.

of Westcott and Hort. C. J. Vaughan says ⁴⁰ :—

“ It was unavoidable that men who have given a lifetime to the criticism of the text should exercise a powerful influence upon the judgment of their less qualified colleagues on points involving alterations of reading.”

And B. H. Kennedy is even more precise ⁴¹ :—

“ That criticism ” [of Westcott and Hort] “ I own did often decide the judgment of the revising Company, but, in disputed cases, always after arguments on the different sides heard with careful attention.”

And Edwin Palmer says ⁴² :—

“ There were amongst us textual critics of different schools, whose names are well known to the learned world. When they agreed, those of us who had not made textual criticism our special study ” [and he admits that he had not] “ followed their consentient voice. When they differed, we deemed it our duty to ask for a statement of the evidence, and to decide between them.”

But it is time for us to turn our attention to the minority of Moderates, who at first hotly contested the principles of the Progressives, and afterwards acted more or less fitfully as a drag upon them. Foremost amongst these was F. H. A. Scrivener, who had devoted his life to the study of textual criticism, had collated numerous MSS., had published some very important ones *in extenso*,⁴³ and had edited many works of high repute, including an *Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*. From his writings the theologians of

⁴⁰ *Authorized or Revised*, p. xi.

⁴¹ *Ely Lectures*, p. 155.

⁴² *Report of Newcastle Congress*, p. 483.

⁴³ For instance, *Codex Bezae* and *Codex Augiensis*.

England might have felt reassured that any revision in which he was to have part would certainly be on moderate lines. But, as a matter of fact, although Scrivener was one of the most assiduous of the Revisers (having 399 attendances out of a possible 407 to his credit), and never failed to state his case fully, he found himself constantly in a minority, and was in truth very often voted down by sheer force of numbers when Hort and Westcott opposed him, as they generally did. Not that Scrivener was prepared to give an unqualified support to the traditional text, or blind to the value of the great Vatican and Sinaitic Manuscripts. Indeed no one who has read his *Introduction*, much less his *Collation of the Sinaitic Manuscript*, can make so silly an assertion. But, while he had been taught, by the actual work of collation, to use those MSS. as only two out of many helps to the reconstruction of the primitive text, Hort and Westcott had persuaded themselves to regard their consentient voice as the one virtually final and infallible authority.⁴⁴ And, seeing that their consentient voice differed from the traditional text in thousands of places, it is easy to perceive that a pair of critics holding that *consensus* to be decisive, would be in perpetual conflict with another who wished to accord it a less exclusive supremacy. Probably nine-tenths of the textual struggles and "countless divisions"⁴⁵ at the table in that old

⁴⁴ On one of these occasions the Dean of Rochester wittily remarked that it was time they raised a cry of "No Popery!" See David Brown in *The Expository Times*, v. 5.

⁴⁵ See Ellicott's speech in Convocation, May 17, 1881.

Jerusalem Chamber were about that very question as to the proper amount of weight to be accorded to the Vatican and Sinaitic MSS., Hort and Westcott claiming pre-eminence for their *consensus*, while Scrivener pleaded for caution. And, as Hort and Westcott outnumbered Scrivener in the ratio of two to one, so their followers outnumbered his followers, and therefore often came out of the conflict with flying colours; though at other times they had to be content with registering their preferences in the margin only. Dr. Salmon's masterly indictment of Hort's textual theory was still in the distant future, nor could the Chairman have foreseen that a day would come when he himself, after a perusal of that racy and convincing indictment, would publish his opinion that ⁴⁶ :—

“ In the introductory volume by Dr. Hort, assumptions have been made, and principles laid down, which in several places have plainly affected the text, and led to the maintenance of readings which, to many minds, it will seem really impossible to accept. Greatly ⁴⁷ as I reverence the unwearied patience, the exhaustive research, and the critical sagacity of these two eminent, and now lamented, members of our former Company, I yet cannot resist the conviction that Dr. Salmon, in his interesting criticism of the Text of the New Testament, has successfully indicated three or more particulars ” [he should rather have said “ principles ”] “ which must cause some arrest in our final judgment of the text of Westcott and Hort.”

and,

“ Dr. Hort has shown too distinct a tendency to elevate probable hypotheses into the realm of established facts.”

⁴⁶ *Addresses* (A.D. 1901), p. 64. ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

Furthermore he goes on to specify the three particulars in which he admits that Salmon has demonstrated the weakness of Hort's theory, viz.: (1) the authoritative revision of the so-called Syrian text; (2) the differentiation of the Neutral text from the Alexandrian; and (3) the continuous and studied disregard of Western authorities.

Well, as I have said, the Chairman could hardly have foreseen that he himself would one day remove some of these main props of Dr. Hort's theory, and (what is even more important) the text founded on that theory. For, shortly after the publication of the Revised Version, Bishop Ellicott himself and Archdeacon Palmer published under the title of "*The Revisers and the Greek Text of the New Testament*," by Two Members of the New Testament Company," a little book in vindication of the Greek Text which the Revisers had adopted: and, so far from there having then been any desire to throw Westcott and Hort overboard, they are almost implicitly followed, not only in their text, but in their textual theory, including some of the very particulars of which Ellicott afterwards admitted that Dr. Salmon had shown the weakness. For instance,

"The third of these texts is, for critical purposes, by far the most interesting and valuable. It is a text which appears to be free alike from Syrian, Western, and Alexandrian characteristics, and is therefore called Neutral by Dr. Hort. Strong evidence is produced for the existence of a text which deserves this name and character."⁴⁸

⁴⁸ p. 23.

In writing this sentence, and much more to the same effect, the "Two Revisers" convey not one syllable of caution against Hort's theories, but rather suggest that they have unreservedly adopted them. Yet, twenty years afterwards (1901), one of those same "Two Revisers," no less a person than the Chairman himself, and the sole survivor of the whole Company, in what sounds very like a pathetic palinode, *dissociates his brethren as much as possible from the incubus of Westcott and Hort*, and admits that "Dr. Hort has shown too distinct a tendency to elevate probable hypotheses into the realm of established facts." Now that was the very thing that Scrivener thought and said at the time of the Revision, when he would not be listened to. Here are his words ⁴⁹ (published 1883):—

"There is little hope for the stability of their imposing structure, if its foundations have been laid on the sandy ground of ingenious conjecture: and since barely the smallest vestige of historical evidence has ever been alleged in support of the views of these accomplished editors, their teaching must either be received as intuitively true, or dismissed from our consideration as precarious, and even visionary."

That in the Jerusalem Chamber there was most commonly a majority in favour of Westcott and Hort, and against Scrivener, I cannot help ascribing to the fact that public and independent criticism had never been directed to the theories of the former, inasmuch as neither the theories themselves nor the text founded upon them had yet seen the light. Ellicott's later admissions, forced from him at the point of the bayonet, seem to me a clear

⁴⁹ *Introduction*, ii., 285.

proof of this. The textual work of the Revisers was done in a tremendous hurry under the inexorable pressure exerted by the personal influence and eager advocacy of the two Cambridge theorists, and was to that extent in the nature of a leap in the dark. As Professor Sanday said ⁵⁰ :—

“ They were thus able to make their views heard in the council-chamber, and to support them with all the weight of their personal authority, while as yet the outer public had but partial access to them.”

But, as the same learned Professor remarked ⁵¹ :—

“ It would certainly have been a fortunate thing if those difficulties could have been thoroughly thrashed out, and the whole question placed upon a firm and stable footing before the Revised Version had been undertaken. A few years may see the labours of generations, accumulating slowly but surely, at last reach their goal. And then it may be a source of regret that this weighty task of Revision had not been reserved until its first and perhaps greatest half was already done, and all that remained for the Revisers was to step into and occupy ground prepared for them.”

But, as it was, the Revisers found themselves obliged to form a Greek text as they went along, and many of them, not being versed in textual criticism, nor having been selected on account of any supposed proficiency therein, but only on account of their presumed ability as translators, or rather revisers, *were simply at the mercy of the experts*, and occupied very much the position of

⁵⁰ *Expositor*, ii., 2, 247.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 277, and see his speech at the Newcastle Church Congress, 1881.

the army in a Homeric battle. As C. J. Vaughan said, when referring to this very matter ⁵² :—

“There is everywhere a growing disposition to put more and more trust in experts, and to place little confidence in the view that any man gifted with common sense can form a sound opinion about anything.”

Yet there were some very able scholars amongst them, who would have been well qualified at least to weigh evidence and to return an impartial verdict as jurymen thereon; but in some cases those were the very men who generally, through excessive distrust of their own powers, refrained from voting on textual questions. In this they certainly acted most unwisely, as well as timorously, for, not having been embodied primarily for critical purposes, they should have voted for the received text, on the principle that possession is nine points of the law, unless where there was really satisfactory evidence to show that it was a “plain and clear error.” They were the trustees of the public, a fact which they should not have forgotten. George Moberly was one of these.

“For my own part,” he says,⁵³ “being fully conscious of my inability to give an opinion of value on such questions, I studiously refrained for the most part from voting upon them at all, nor did I ever do so unless the argument appeared to me to be conclusive in favour of the existing text.”

We are told the same of Robert Scott, who had spent his life elaborating and keeping up to date the

⁵² *Authorized or Revised*, p. xi.

⁵³ *The Charge* of the Lord Bishop of Salisbury, 1882, p. 17.

magnificent Greek Lexicon which bears his name. He "declined to give his judgment not being an expert," says his colleague David Brown.⁵⁴ Of the attitude of some other members of the Company towards textual questions it is impossible for me to say anything very positive, but Richard C. Trench, William Lee, Alexander Roberts, John Eadie, and the two co-opted members, Charles Wordsworth and David Brown,⁵⁵ are supposed to have sided with Dr. Scrivener. There is at all events no ambiguity about the attitude of Charles Merivale, a co-opted member who attended only nineteen meetings. He says ⁵⁶ :—

"We are altogether playing havoc with the old text, in spite of my strong conservative inclination—not influence, I am sorry to say."

and again—

"I may possibly do more to check the rashness of my adversaries by withdrawing from THE CONTEST than by vainly resisting."

Such was the result of some of Hort's "stiff battles," and "incessant voting and speaking"; of Westcott's "hard fighting" and "battles royal"; and of the "ceaseless differences of opinion and countless divisions" mentioned by Ellicott afterwards in his speech in Convocation.⁵⁷ Plastic minds were moulded by Hort and Westcott, but the Historian of the Roman Empire was not one of

⁵⁴ *Memoir* of D. Brown, p. 227; but, on the other hand, see Ellicott, *Addresses*, p. 63, where Scott is mentioned as one who took great interest in textual criticism.

⁵⁵ "I voted for the most part with him" (Scrivener). D. Brown, quoted in *Expository Times*, v., 5.

⁵⁶ *Autobiography* of Dean Merivale, pp. 289, 293.

⁵⁷ See below, p. 89.

these : he would break but not bend : and, finding that he had no influence, and could not check the rashness of his adversaries, he retired in disgust.

But what a side-light is thereby opened upon the proceedings in the Jerusalem Chamber, and how totally the analogy sought to be drawn by interested parties between the Revisions of 1881 and 1611 breaks down. The dominant faction of textual critics, having at their beck and call a working majority of amateurs ready for the sound of the division-bell, push their unproved, unpublished, and uncriticised theories to the utmost limits, showing neither reverence for the traditional text nor consideration for its defenders,⁵⁸ but using their tyrant majority to practically closure them. As Moberly quietly puts it ⁵⁹ :—

“ Although both the chief schools of Biblical criticism were most ably represented among us, yet inasmuch as it shortly became apparent that the views of one of them generally carried, on a division, a majority of the votes, the chief supporter of the other refrained from challenging a division in many instances, preferring to wait for the second revision, when the requirement of a majority of two-thirds of the Company present would necessarily operate in a conservative direction, excluding various changes which would have been carried by a mere majority in the first instance. The operation of this rule was of course strongly conservative in general, but it was also irregular and fragmentary, depending, as it necessarily did, on the varying *personnel* of the Company in different months, and on different days.”

⁵⁸ “ Poor—wishes to have the MSS. reckoned at a certain value ” ; “ Yesterday—got hopelessly confused.” Extracts from Westcott’s letters to his wife, May 24 and Oct. 9, 1871 (see *Life*). The Cambridge Doctor had a poor opinion of the Conservatives ! ⁵⁹ *Charge*, p. 17.

But indeed the second Revision did not begin until after April 23, 1874,⁶⁰ by which time the Moderates had become much weakened by the loss of some of their best members, as well as disheartened by constant defeat; so that it ceases to be a matter for wonder that, as the Chairman said,⁶¹ "the greater part of the decisions relating to the text that were arrived at in the first revision were accepted as final." Small wonder indeed, for at those later meetings the average attendance cannot have exceeded fourteen,⁶² and some of the very best men were absent; for Eadie had died shortly after the second revision began; Merivale had resigned; Trench, on one of his returns from the work of revision, had met with a severe accident on the steamer, which prevented his attendance for some years⁶³; Roberts apparently found it increasingly difficult to come up from Scotland; Brown⁶⁴ was afflicted with partial deafness; Wordsworth was out of sympathy with the turn that events had taken; and Moberly⁶⁵ found his "Diocesan engagements and his increasing age were rapidly making it impossible for him to keep up the regular habit of devoting a week in ten months of every year to the close labour of the Revision." Indeed I may add that the three Episcopal members, Trench, Moberly, and Wordsworth, were all anxious at different times to resign, but were overruled, owing to the unwillingness of their colleagues to part with them, doubtless

⁶⁰ Newth, p. 123. ⁶¹ Ellicott, *Addresses*, p. 68.

⁶² Deduced from Newth, pp. 123 and 125.

⁶³ *Charge* of Richard Chenevix, Archbishop of Dublin, 1881, p. 17. ⁶⁴ *Memoir*, p. 217. ⁶⁵ *Charge*, p. 15.

not only on account of good fellowship, but because the entire prestige of the Revision would have gone with them.

I think that, after what I have recorded above from authentic sources, we are now able to appreciate the true inwardness of Principal Newth's description of the routine of the Company,⁶⁶ the accuracy of which has been vouched for more than once by the Chairman himself ⁶⁷ :—

“ The Chairman invites the Company to proceed with the revision, and reads a short passage as given in the Authorised Version. The question is then asked whether any *textual* changes are proposed. . . . If any change is proposed, the evidence for and against is briefly stated, and the proposal considered. The duty of stating this evidence is, by tacit consent, devolved upon two members of the Company, who, from their previous studies, are specially entitled to speak with authority upon such questions—Dr. Scrivener and Dr. Hort—and who come prepared to enumerate particularly the authorities on either side. Dr. Scrivener opens up the matter by stating the facts of the case, and by giving his judgment upon the bearing of the evidence. Dr. Hort follows, and mentions any additional matters that may call for notice, and, if differing from Dr. Scrivener's estimate of the weight of the evidence, gives his reasons, and states his own view. After discussion the vote of the Company is taken, and the proposed reading accepted or rejected. The text being thus settled,⁶⁸ the Chairman asks for proposals on the rendering.”

On this let me make two quotations. The *Dublin*

⁶⁶ p. 119. ⁶⁷ E.g. *The Revisers and the Greek Text*, p. 36.

⁶⁸ It was wittily observed by Beckett that this was quite enough to “*settle*” the text compiled by the Revisers! Ellicott, *Addresses*, p. 57, says: “ Each question of reading, as it arose, was settled by the votes of the Company.”

Review ⁶⁹ sarcastically but not untruly remarks—

“It must be confessed that Gospel by ballot is an essentially modern idea.”

And the obituary article in the *Quarterly* on Bishop Lightfoot, an extremely able production,⁷⁰ says :—

“The glimpses afforded by Dr. Newth and others of the method of voting are not very encouraging when we think of the inequality of the voters. Surely here, if anywhere, was there place for the principle that votes should be weighed and not counted.”

Such however was the method according to which the Revisers' text came to be arranged incidentally on what the Chairman had previously adumbrated as the principle of *solvere ambulando*.⁷¹ After a Homeric contest between opposing champions, the rank and file, who had for the most part been mere spectators and auditors, gave a silent vote, or abstained from voting, and a bare majority decided. The beaten minority then built their hopes on the second revision; but in process of time became numerically weaker, and “the greater part of the decisions relating to the text that were arrived at in the first revision were accepted as final.” Yet these same Revisers, in their Preface, say that :—

“textual criticism, as applied to the Greek New Testament, forms a special study of much intricacy and difficulty, and even now leaves room for considerable variety of opinion among competent critics.”

⁶⁹ July, 1881.

⁷⁰ Republished by Macmillan, 1894, p. 46.

⁷¹ *On the Revision of the English Testament*, p. 49. “We seem driven then to the third alternative in reference to a text—*solvere ambulando*”; cf. p. 30, “making the current Textus Receptus the standard, and departing from it only when critical or grammatical considerations show that it is clearly necessary—in fact, *solvere ambulando*.”

CHAPTER V

COMMITTEE ENGLISH

IT has been remarked already that the work of Revision once begun could not well be confined within narrow limits. Safeguards were, in the nature of the case, illusory. Indeed the only guarantee that the public could in any event have had, that their time-honoured Bible would not be completely rewritten, lay in the *personnel* of the Revisers themselves; just as, in an Irish Land Bill, nobody worries himself about safeguards, the only practical question being "What are the names of the New Commissioners"? Thus the public had to depend on the anticipated good sense and moderation of the Revisers, and on whatever they could gather from the pre-revision writings of some of them, such as Ellicott, Trench, Alford, and one or two others,¹ and from the speeches of Wilberforce in Convocation.

But, although the outside public could know little or nothing of what was likely to emerge as the result of the Revisers' labours, or whether they would prove moderate or immoderate in the amount of change, those troublesome but practical questions soon came up and pressed for decision in the Jerusalem Chamber itself. Let the Revisers them-

¹ See above, chap. ii., as to Ellicott and Trench, and as to Alford his *How to Study the New Testament*.

selves describe how the situation did as a matter of fact develop. Dr. Newth says ² :—

“ At a very early period of their labours it became clearly manifest to the Company that they could only do their work satisfactorily by doing it VERY THOROUGHLY, and that no question in any way affecting the sense or the rendering could be passed over because of its seeming unimportance.”

Bishop Ellicott says ³ :—

“ I can clearly remember a very full discussion on the true meaning of the word ” [faithfulness] “ at one of the early meetings of the Company. Some alteration had been proposed in the rendering of the Greek, to which objection was made that it did not come under the rule and principle of faithfulness. This led to a general, and, as it proved, a final discussion. Bishop Lightfoot, I remember, took an earnest part in it. He contended that our revision must be a true and THOROUGH one ; that such a meeting as ours could not be assembled for many years to come, and that if the rendering was plainly more accurate and more true to the original, it ought not to be put aside as incompatible with some supposed aspect of the rule of faithfulness.”

This attitude of Lightfoot is attested also by another writer ⁴ :—

“ There is reason to believe that the general character of the revision was in no small measure determined by his earnest pleading at the first session against acquiescence in a perfunctory or inadequate type of revision.” And in this department, as well as in textual criticism, his Cambridge colleagues, Hort and Westcott, enthusiastically supported him. Hort says ⁵ :—

² p. 120. ³ *Addresses*, p. 98.

⁴ *Dict. of National Biog.*, s.v. J. B. LIGHTFOOT.

⁵ *Life of Hort*, vol. ii., July 19, 1870.

"There is but one safe rule, to be AS SCRUPULOUSLY EXACT AS POSSIBLE, remembering of course that there is a truth of tone as well as of grammar and dictionary."

And—

"We have successfully resisted being warned off dangerous ground, where the needs of revision required that it should not be shirked."

Westcott says ⁶ :—

"Faithfulness, the most candid and THE MOST SCRUPULOUS, was the central aim of the Revisers"; and "the claim which they confidently make—the claim which alone could justify their labours—is that they have placed the English reader far more nearly than before in the position of the Greek scholar." The translator "must feel that in such a case he has no right to obscure THE LEAST SHADE OF EXPRESSION which can be rendered ; or to allow any prepossessions as to likelihood or fitness to outweigh direct evidence."

Of William F. Moulton we are told that ⁷ —

"he acted throughout with the Cambridge group, who preferred linguistic accuracy to literary picturesqueness"; and he says himself ⁸ :—

"The amount of change is a *minimum*."

And William Milligan's attitude is thus expressed ⁹—

"He feared lest the power of habit should lead him astray, and the witchery of familiar words [!] blind him as a translator to any intimation of the inspired writer's thought."

William G. Humphrey says ¹⁰ :

"We have, however, been sensible that no revision short of one that should THOROUGHLY test every word of

⁶ Westcott, *Some Lessons of the Revised Version*, pp. 18 and 4. ⁷ *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*, s.v. W. F. MOULTON.

⁸ *Memoir*, p. 198. ⁹ Moulton's *Memoir*, p. 189.

¹⁰ *A Word on the R.V.*, p. 6.

the existing version, and of the Greek text from which that version is translated, would satisfy the scholars who are conversant with the original, or would for any long time content the people at large."

George Moberly adds his quota of information ¹¹:—

"I acknowledge that the Revised Version contains many changes which might without serious inconvenience have been omitted, and I confess that we did gradually, during the time that I was in constant attendance at the meetings, discontinue more or less the consideration whether this or that change was worth while, and recognise more fully, THE MORE EXTREME PRINCIPLE OF FAITHFULNESS as laid down in the Preface. . . . It would have been much to be regretted if slight inaccuracies . . . had been allowed to disfigure a work which *might possibly* be received as the authorised English Bible, because taken one by one we did not think it worth while to make the proposed change.

Charles J. Vaughan says ¹²:—

"It was, I believe, an impossibility in the nature of things, that a company of earnest and competent men should enter upon such an undertaking with their hands tied by any number or any stringency of rules as to the 'thus far and no farther.' To be met at every turn by the question, 'Is this important?' or 'Will not this do?' would be fatal to that sense of honest freedom in representing as exactly as possible the very word written by inspiration of God, which alone could give spirit to the workmen or THOROUGHNESS to the work."

¹¹ *Charge*, p. 19.

¹² *Authorized or Revised*, p. ix. It appears, however, that Dr. Vaughan gave an address at Doncaster shortly after the publication of the N. T., in which he indicated that the Revisers had made too many changes. See Beckett's *Reply to Dr. Farrar's Answer*, (Murray, 1882.) See also p. 113 below.

Edwin Palmer says ¹³ :—

“ The conviction forced itself upon them at an early stage of their work, and grew in strength as that work went on, that if the Authorised Version was to be touched at all, it ought to be made in all points as true to the original as their utmost powers and utmost exertions might avail to make it. . . . It has been their aim, in one word, to revise both the Greek text and the English translation THOROUGHLY. . . . In striving for completeness, I doubt not that we have pushed our efforts beyond the limits of public expectation.”

Finally he avers that he and his colleagues acted—
“ without a thought of the judgment which this or that man, or set of men, might pass on its execution.”

The foregoing extracts are conclusive evidence that *ten or eleven of the Company were fully determined to go in for the principle of “thorough,”* and to turn out as exact and literal a reproduction of their adopted Greek text as possible. No pains were to be spared, and nothing which they judged an inaccuracy, however trivial, was to be overlooked. The Revision was to descend to the minutest and most microscopic details, and the utmost scrupulosity was to be its object.

But the reader can easily see that, in this pursuit of scrupulous faithfulness in the smallest details, the Company were travelling far beyond their instructions. Convocation, interpreting (I feel sure) public opinion, ordered that “*necessary*” changes alone should be made, and that word “*necessary*” occurs three times in the five Resolutions of Convocation, as if to lay decisive emphasis on that aspect of revision.¹⁴ But “*faithfulness*” was the word sub-

¹³ Newcastle Church Congress.

¹⁴ See above, p. 30.

stituted for "necessary" by the Committee delegated by Convocation, and was defined by the Chairman¹⁵ to mean faithfulness "to the original in its plain grammatical meaning as elicited by accurate interpretation." So that, whereas Convocation and the public desired the removal of every *error*, these Revisers conceived it to be their business to remove every *inaccuracy*. A very important distinction; since there are many fine shades of grammatical inaccuracy, and, while all well-instructed men might be supposed to agree on what constitutes an error, there might be an infinite variety of opinion as to what constitutes an inaccuracy.¹⁶ And, inasmuch as the striving after scrupulous grammatical literalism landed the Revisers in over thirty-six thousand alterations,¹⁷ or *four and a half for each verse* in the New Testament, whereas the utmost that had been predicted by the Chairman, when persuading Convocation to sanction the experiment, was *one change for each verse*, it is obvious that the decision of the majority of the Company to be led blindfold by Lightfoot

¹⁵ *Addresses*, p. 98.

¹⁶ The best disquisition I have seen on this distinction is by Ellicott himself, *On the Revision of the English Testament*, p. 18. In a very much later publication, *The Expositor* for December 1892, the Bishop of Gloucester said that "the Revisers were all men who were keenly alive to the differences between mere accuracy and true faithfulness—for the subject was perpetually coming before them"! How extraordinarily inconsistent some of these *dicta* are!

¹⁷ A correspondent of the *Guardian* for August 10, 1881, p. 1136, and again p. 1675, estimated the number of changes as 36,191. (See *Companion to the Greek Test. and Eng. Version*, by Philip Schaff, p. 419, note.)

and his co-Professors in their explorations into the regions of grammatical and lexicographical nicety had the most far-reaching results. It led to the complete rewriting of the New Testament. But it is quite permissible to believe that the Revisers who adopted that line of action made a tremendous mistake. An unaccountable one also. For what said that most scrupulous, most thorough, and most minute Reviser, Dr. Westcott, in a book ¹⁸ which he published *the very identical year of the publication of the Revised New Testament*, and after ten years of fighting for slavish literalism :— ?

“ THE PRECISE AND LITERAL EXACTNESS WHICH IS REQUIRED IN A VERSION OF SCRIPTURE FOR STUDY IS NOT REQUIRED IN A VERSION FOR USE IN PUBLIC SERVICE. FOR SUCH A PURPOSE THE MAIN OBJECT MUST BE TO SECURE A PLAIN AND RHYTHMICAL EXPRESSION OF THE SENSE OF THE ORIGINAL, EVEN AT THE SACRIFICE OF THE LETTER.”

Surely that extraordinary sentence indicates the high-water mark of inconsistency !

Let us now consider the opposition which the Conservative minority offered to Lightfoot's theory of revision. Archbishop Trench must have formed one of that minority, for he took an early opportunity of stating publicly that ¹⁹—

“ the not unfrequent sacrifice of grace and ease to the rigorous requirements of a literal accuracy ” had been “ pushed to a faulty excess,”

and continues—

“ the demands made from time to time on the English

¹⁸ Preface to *The Paragraph Psalter* (1881), p. xiii.

¹⁹ *Charge*, p. 22.

language prove more than the language in the most dexterous and accomplished hands can satisfy,"

and PROPHECIES THAT THE REVISION WILL NEVER SUPERSEDE THE AUTHORISED VERSION.²⁰ But a little later his opinion became still worse, as we can see from a letter written to him by Dr. Thompson, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, and dated December 20, 1881 ²¹ :—

"Your remarks on the Revised Version very much agree with my own impressions. I rarely read a chapter in it without stumbling at some word or phrase which seems to me a needless change for the worse."

Archdeacon Lee must have formed another of the minority, for one who was an intimate friend of his wrote of him that ²² :—

"No member of the Company regretted more than he the number of changes which altered the rhythm of the Authorized Version where the sense was fairly correct. Here, though submitting loyally to the majority, he retained, as usual, his conservative convictions."

Thus the Irish members objected to this "luxury of emendation," and so also did the Scottish members.

Dr. Eadie did not live to see the publication of the work, but just before his death, and after about five years' experience of revision, he published a *History of the English Bible* (in 1876), in which the following significant passage occurs ²³ :—

²⁰ Moberly likewise said in his *Charge* : "I do not wish it to take the place of the version of 1611 in the public service of the Church."

²¹ *Letters and Memorials* of Archbishop Trench, ii. 216.

²² Article in *Athenaeum*, May 19, 1883, by Professor J. P. Mahaffy, D.D. ²³ Vol. ii. p. 353.

"A revision may and ought to preserve the quaintness and beauty of the English version, and it will not attempt to sew a piece of new cloth on an old garment, forming an unseemly and incongruous patch. To present a popular as well as a literal version is no doubt a task of uncommon difficulty. A literal version for scholars or for private study would be a comparatively easy work ; but one for the use of the people requires the nice combination of many qualities, as correctness, clearness, rhythm, and strength—for it must not be rugged on the plea of exactness, or graceful at the expense of fidelity. . . . It must be lucid without any paraphrastic dilution, and nervous without inversions or the use of unfamiliar terms. It behoves it to be at once true to the original and loyal to the English idiom, expressing the mind and thought of the author in his own manner. The attempt to follow in all cases the order of the Greek words would produce a cumbrous and awkward translation, especially as emphatic terms do not occupy the same position in Greek and English clauses."

It is therefore no surprise to us to be told by another Reviser that Dr. Eadie, who was, notwithstanding his great erudition, generally a silent member of the Company, belonged to the Conservative school of Revisers.²⁴ So also did Dr. Roberts, Bishop Wordsworth, and Principal Brown. They sent in a joint protest, says Roberts,²⁵ and

"expressed themselves in writing against the unduly wide scope, as they imagined, which the Revision had assumed in the hands of the majority of the Company. Dr. Brown was specially emphatic on this point. He often stated to the writer his dissent from the manifold, and as it seemed both to him and to me, UNNECESSARY LATITUDE OF CHANGE which had been accepted by the Revisers."

²⁴ *Memoir of D. Brown*, p. 217 ; also *Life of John Eadie*, by James Brown, p. 345. ²⁵ *Memoir of Brown*, p. 219.

But at first Brown had been carried away by specious arguments. He says ²⁶ :—

“ In saying this, however, I more or less condemn myself. For when the itch of change (if I may so speak) took possession of the Company, I was infected by it. But as the work went on, I was one of those who saw that the changes which were being made were not only far too many, but, out of a desire to squeeze out the last shred of the sense, were DESTROYING THE PURITY OF THE ENGLISH, AND ALL HOPE OF OUR VERSION BEING ACCEPTED BY THE PUBLIC.”

Also ²⁷ :—

“ I said this to my learned friend Dr. Moulton (he will allow me, I am sure, to refer to him as one who voted for the changes which others of us could not endure.) ‘ The public will never stand that,’ I said. ‘ Oh, but in a few years, when accustomed to it, they will,’ he replied. ‘ Never,’ answered I; and eleven years since have proved too well the truth of this.”

With all this compare the following from *The Episcopate of Charles Wordsworth* ²⁸ :—

“ He did not, indeed, find himself in harmony with the methods and actions of the majority of his colleagues, and his elaborate ‘ *Final Suggestions on New Testament Revision: the Four Gospels*,’ printed in 1879, disclose the fact that he considered many of the alterations unnecessary and pedantic, especially those made in regard to the use of the definite article and the tenses of verbs. He feared rightly ²⁹ that THE REVISERS RAN THE RISK OF PREVENTING THE POPULAR ACCEPTANCE OF THEIR WORK by the amount of changes they introduced, and this particularly because the first part of that work was

²⁶ Ibid. p. 222.

²⁷ *The Expository Times*, iv. 64.

²⁸ By John Wordsworth, Bishop of Salisbury, p. 211.

²⁹ This was published in 1899 and the word “rightly” seems to show that C. Wordsworth’s fears were only too well justified in the opinion of his nephew.

the Gospels, in which needless alteration would be most generally felt and most keenly resented. He agreed, in fact, with Dr. Frederick Field, whose '*Otium Norvicense, Pars Tertia*,' was probably the most important criticism of the many to which the Revised Version was subjected."

Wordsworth's nephew goes on to tell us that the following paragraphs were prepared for the *Annals*, but that he has had to fill them out here and there :—

"One of our New Testament Company [Dr. Roberts] has written to me quite recently [(September, 1881) : ' Since I wrote my *Companion*, my judgment as to the Revised Version has become much more unfavourable. Indeed I cannot but look upon it, in its present state, as being A DEPLORABLE FAILURE. '] I do not quite go so far as that, but [I was seriously dissatisfied with the result]. Our Chairman had many excellent qualities for his post, but he was much to blame for not reminding us that by introducing so many minute and unexpected alterations we were exceeding the terms of our commission, and not only for not reminding us of the fact, but for not preventing it, as I think he might and ought to have done.³⁰ . . . I joined the Company on the understanding [that our instructions would be exactly followed]. And when I found, at the completion of the Gospels, that we had far exceeded those instructions, I was anxious to withdraw · but Dr. Scrivener persuaded me to remain on to the end. HE HIMSELF SHARED MY DISSATISFACTION, at least to some extent ; and he assured me that when the end came I should have an opportunity of joining with others against the proceedings of which we disapproved ;

³⁰ " Bishop Charles Wordsworth . . . was compelled at the last to refuse his name to a testimonial of thanks to the Chairman (a step which caused him much pain) because he held so strongly that the number of minute and unnecessary changes made was in direct violation of the instructions under which the work was undertaken. " — W. W. How, in *Expositor*, Fourth Series, vi. 247.

but this was never done. No such opportunity was ever found."

We see in the above extracts about Dr. Roberts his growing dissatisfaction with the Revision in September, 1881. That feeling had not been in the least modified by December, 1882; for he then wrote ³¹ :—

"It is to be hoped that the work" [of Old Testament Revision] "will not be marked by that amount of minute and really needless change which is one of the greatest weaknesses of the Revised New Testament."

Dr. G. Vance Smith was also against this minute scrupulosity, and this "luxury of emendation." He says ³² that the Revision contains "no small amount of ELABORATE OVER-CORRECTION," and proceeds :—

"I am half inclined to confess that in several respects the results which have been arrived at in the volume as now published go some way, if not to justify, at least to illustrate the doubts and fears of those who were against revision." . . . "The alterations, in my humble judgment, are not 'as few as possible,' but rather the *contrary*; and in many cases, while minute and literally accurate, they seem to be so in such a way as even to run counter to the very principle of faithfulness to which they ought to have been subordinated."

He then speaks of "the great mass of little changes," and says that—

"a great proportion of them may be held to have been uncalled for. These will be considered by most readers as mere intruders, breaking in upon the old familiar music of the Authorised, and doing so without any gain

³¹ *Old Testament Revision*, p. v.

³² *Nineteenth Century*, June, 1881.

of sense by way of compensation—nay, sometimes even with a loss.”

I do not know whether we are to rank Dean Stanley as having been another opponent of the principle of “thorough.” Let the reader judge ³³ :—

“In its” [i.e. the Company’s] “proceedings he took the warmest interest, and regularly attended its meetings in the Jerusalem Chamber, where he pleaded for the retention of every innocent archaism.”

With which compare one of Hort’s letters ³⁴ :—

“The wise folks who anticipate a ‘Frenchified’ or jarring Bible would be edified if they could hear Dean Stanley fighting for every antique phrase which can be defended.”

And Ellicott’s panegyric in Convocation ³⁵ on the death of Stanley :—

“The Revised Version bore many marks of the culture and good taste of the Dean, and graceful diction and harmonious numbers found in him a constant friend. The Dean, too, defended the retention of some innocent archaisms which had become honoured in the minds of the people, and they were spared accordingly.”

Which last remark makes us speculate on what the Revised Version would have been without Dean Stanley !

I have now given some indication of the recorded opinions of all the Revisers except five, on the subject of the English translation. In some cases those opinions are emphatic in praise or censure, in other cases they are more or less indecisive. Some of these Revisers were disciples of Dr. Light-

³³ *Life and Letters of Dean Stanley*, ii. 499.

³⁴ Hort’s *Life*, ii., July 7, 1870.

³⁵ See *The Times*, July 20, 1881.

foot, others were opponents ; but how far the latter had the courage to press their opposition, or how successful it was, we cannot tell. In order to round off this portion of my subject, I may say that of the remaining five I have failed to find the opinion of Dr. Angus,³⁶ but that *the other four must have been more or less discontented* with the result of the Revision.

As to Dean Scott³⁷ let the following testimony be considered :—

“ On one occasion when the English word, which had to be used, according to our principle, for the Greek, brought out what seemed to him most objectionable English, the member who was looked up to as the master of lexicography exclaimed, ‘ WE ARE IMPOVERISHING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE,’ in response to which a whisper of ‘ Hear, hear ’ was heard across the table.”

Dean Blakesley, a former Fellow and Tutor of Trinity College, Cambridge, said before the day of publication³⁸ :—

³⁶ Schaff, *Companion*, p. 379, mentions Angus as having contributed articles on the Revision, but he does not distinctly say where. President G. P. Gould, the successor of Dr. Angus at the College, Regent’s Park, in a courteous letter to me (Sept. 17, 1903) said that he knew of no record of Dr. Angus’ views on the success or otherwise of the Revision.

³⁷ David Brown in *The Expository Times*, iv. 64. In the *Memoir* of W. F. Moulton, p. 100, we are told that Moulton, Palmer, and Scott were very anxious that Dean Burgon’s attack should be answered, but that Hort and Lightfoot thought otherwise. We are also told that Ellicott’s opinion was that that attack had had great effect.

³⁸ *Episcopate of C. Wordsworth*, p. 214. This letter is dated January 9, 1881.

"I hardly know whether to rejoice or grieve at the termination of our task of Revision. It is certainly an improvement on the old Version; but then IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN MADE MUCH BETTER STILL IF EXECUTED BY FEWER HANDS."

Professor Kennedy says ³⁹ that he—

"WOULD FAIN HOPE" [that the Revision] "IS NOT UN-ALTERABLY PERMANENT";

and again :—

"I venture to ask those who are the proper persons to consider and decide, whether, after the interval of a year, within which time criticism at home and abroad may have said its last word, the Revising Company might not usefully BE INVITED TO MEET AGAIN, and, while they review their reviewers, to review themselves by such light as would have been gained."

And Dean Bickersteth ⁴⁰ speaks of the Revised Bible—

"which in due time, with God's blessing, may form THE BASIS of a new Authorized Bible";

and again :—

"If I were asked what is likely to be the future of the Revised Version, I should feel some difficulty in answering. The least that can be said of it is that it is confessedly one of the best Commentaries on the New Testament, and a most important contribution towards a new Version. Perhaps the best thing that could happen would be this: that after the Revised Version of the Old Testament shall have made its appearance, the whole revised Bible should be submitted to A SMALL, COMPETENT, AND IMPARTIAL BODY OF MEN, thoroughly appreciating the merits and excellences of both the Authorized Version and the Revised, WHO MIGHT INTRODUCE EVERY NEEDFUL ALTERATION AND EVERY MANI-

³⁹ *Ely Lectures*, pp. xvii., 59.

⁴⁰ *A Lecture* in the Chapter House of Lichfield Cathedral (Dec. 30, 1884) by Edward Bickersteth, D.D., pp. 5, 28.

FEST IMPROVEMENT INTO THE AUTHORIZED VERSION, and so give it back to us with all its own intrinsic merits, and with none of its blemishes or errors." ⁴¹

From all the above opinions it will be evident to the reader that, although Lightfoot's pet scheme of etymological and grammatical "faithfulness" might from time to time secure the votes of a majority of those (say sixteen) Revisers who happened to put in an appearance at the Jerusalem Chamber, it certainly did not commend itself to the unhesitating approval of a clear majority of the twenty-five members of the Company, even during the progress of the Revision; while, afterwards, it was pretty generally perceived, and acknowledged, to have been a huge mistake. Comparatively few of the Revisers gave it their calm approval when they were able to look back and review it in the light of its results. The majority must, like Dr. Brown, have repented of the line which was taken on the critical occasion when the principle of "faithfulness" came up for discussion, and must have recognised that too much weight had been allowed to the collective *nostrums* of the Cambridge Divinity Professors. It must have been with a twinge of regret, not unmingled with apprehension as to the future, that they looked back

⁴¹ The *Historical Account* (p. 16), evidently embodying the words of a Reviser, probably Ellicott, says: "It is quite probable that here and there throughout the volume particular renderings will be objected to on reasons that will be ultimately considered valid; and IT IS TO BE HOPED THAT WHERE SUCH SHOULD BE THE CASE NOTHING WILL PREVENT THE REVISERS FROM RECONSIDERING THEIR FORMER DECISIONS."

upon the final result of their ten years of conscientious and self-denying toil.

Nor was "faithfulness" the only doubtful principle upon which they had gone in revising the English. Multitudes of passages to which in themselves the principle of "faithfulness" did not apply were changed "by consequence." The Preface says—

"The cases in which these consequential changes have been found necessary (!) are numerous and of very different kinds,"

and they

"are not at variance with the rule of introducing as few changes *in* the Authorised Version as faithfulness *would* ⁴² allow."

⁴² The Preface is but a poor specimen of English style as may be seen from the following sentences which I quote from the *Parallel New Testament* (1882):—

"the form in which the English New Testament *has now been read for 270 years*" (p. vii)

"*choosing amongst readings* contained in the principal editions" (p. vii)

"out of more than 760 marginal notes—only a seventh part consists, etc." (p. ix)

"steps were taken—*for* inviting the co-operation" (p. xi)

{ "the rule of introducing as few changes *in* the Authorised Version" (p. xvi); yet

{ "To introduce as few alterations as possible *into* the text of the Authorised Version" (p. xi)

{ "many changes have been *introduced in* the rendering of the prepositions" (p. xviii); yet

{ "their *introduction into* a version which has held the highest place" (p. xix); and

{ "the division of chapters into verses, which was *introduced into* the New Testament" (p. xxi).

"We now pass *onward*" (p. xiii)

"a sufficiently laborious task remained *in deciding*" (p. xiii)

But classical scholars will ask in amazement, From what did the necessity for making these consequential changes arise? Let Dr. Newth answer ⁴³ :—

“ The pages of a Greek concordance were assigned in equal proportions to different members of the Company, who each ⁴⁴ undertook to examine every passage in which the words falling to his share might occur, and to mark if in any case unnecessary variations in the English had either been introduced or retained. The passages so noticed were brought before the notice of the assembled Company, and the question was in each case considered whether, without any injury to the sense, the rendering of the word under review might be harmonized with that found in other places.”

Ellicott also spoke ⁴⁵ of that process as the sixth of the seven revisions “ all more or less thorough and

“ may be translated *either* ‘straightway,’ ‘forthwith,’ or ‘immediately’ ” (p. xvi)

“ there are some other points of detail which it may be *here* convenient to notice ” (p. xvi)

“ the use of the indefinite past tense *in Greek and English is altogether different* ” (p. xvi)

“ changes of translation will *also* be found in connexion with the aorist participle ” (p. xvii)

“ and because the *introduction* of the definite article might have *introduced* an idea of oneness ” (p. xviii)

“ *there has thus been accumulated* a large amount of materials that have prepared the way ” (p. xx)

{ “ We have frequently been baffled by structural or *idiomatical* peculiarities ” (p. xviii); yet
“ a version that shall be alike literal and *idiomatic* ” (p. xxii)

⁴³ p. 124.

⁴⁴ It is evident from a perusal of Dr. Newth's book that he was no stylist. It abounds in solecisms, but not to the same extent as the *Revised Texts and Margins* of Dr. Vance Smith. The last-named book is indeed a *curiosity of Literature* ! !

⁴⁵ Speech in Convocation, May 17, 1881.

complete" through which our English Testament passed in those ten painstaking years.

But, considering that this dissection of Bruder, and distribution of his *dissecta membra*, for the purpose of the "consequential" or sixth revision, could not have taken place before April or May, 1880, by which time some of the best men had practically ceased to attend the meetings, it is certain that this was decided by a mere minority of Revisers,⁴⁶ and that it had formed no part of the original design. It was like an unnecessary *extra* thought of at the last moment in the carrying out of a building contract; or, to change the metaphor, it was an effort to paint the lily. Now, while I have no wish to deny that to a certain limited extent the Concordance-method may have had its uses, yet to the extravagant extent to which it was carried at the eleventh hour it amounted to little less than a pauperising, a barbarising, and a burlesquing of the art of translating. Most classical books, as Thucydides, Æschylus, and the like, have concordances; but what translator ever thought of measuring his English on that Procrustean bed? Would the Master of Balliol (Robert Scott) have approved of it, if he were at his purely literary work? Would the Oxford Professor of Latin (Edwin Palmer) have followed a method of that sort, in work connected with his chair? Did the famous Greek Professor of Cambridge (Benjamin Hall Kennedy) ever apply such a rule to his brilliant translations? The Concordance-method

⁴⁶ The number was exactly twelve. See Ellicott's speech in Convocation, *Historical Account*, p. 25.

was in truth a most pitiful expedient, whoever first hit upon it.

But a third mistaken principle of revising the English remains to be noticed. I refer to the unnatural importation of an archaic flavour, as if a shower of "untos," "howbeits," "soevers," "aforetimes," "sojourns," "twains," "lacks," and "tarrys" (with many others) had been sprinkled over the work, as a cook peppers her culinary preparations. This unpleasing feature has not been noticed enough in reviews.⁴⁷ It is no exaggeration to say that in at least five hundred and forty-nine places the Revised Version is more archaic than the Authorised Version, and that in all those instances the importation reminds us of the practice usual amongst certain dealers, of faking Sheraton shells, or devising wormholes in modern Chippendale! This is no random accusation, for I have carefully tabulated the instances, comparing them all along with the older version, but it would be tedious work to pass my list through the press. So that it appears to me that if the New Testament were again to undergo revision, as even its authors Professor Kennedy and Dean Bickersteth suggested, the simple plan would be to replace those modern archaisms by the readings of the old Version.

⁴⁷ But Schaff refers to it (p. 460), "The English Revisers, representing an ancient nation that is fond of old things and nurses its very ruins, naturally adhere to these archaisms, and have even unnecessarily increased them." Compare also p. 456.

CHAPTER VI

Enter THE REVISION !

WHATEVER misgivings certain of the Revisers may have felt, during the last year or so of their work, as to its worthiness to supersede the existing version, or as to the probability of its public adoption, we may believe that its completion (on Nov. 11, 1880) came as a very welcome relief to them, and that the winter and spring months which were necessarily consumed in the printing and binding of millions of copies prior to the day of publication, saw the members of the Company, now freed from their heavy load of responsibility, plunge once more into various congenial studies, too long interrupted.

Meanwhile public expectation, which had flagged during those long years of waiting, was stirred into life again, by the announcement that the long-wished-for event was on the eve of happening. The demand for copies made in anticipation by the provincial book trade was "immense,"¹ showing that the Bible-reading portion of the community was on the tiptoe of expectation ; and the University presses were taxed to the utmost, and engaged many extra hands, so as to meet that unprecedented demand. The immediate commercial success of the undertaking was therefore assured.

¹ Archbishop Trench, *Charge*, p. 24.

As a sample of the hopeful and sympathetic spirit in which learned and broad-minded men anticipated the forthcoming publication, I quote some words of a *Lecture* delivered by Dr. G. Salmon (April, 1881) ² :—

“I am well aware that the Revisers have felt as strongly as I do myself the sacredness and the beauty of the Version on which they have been working; and that they will have touched it with reverence and tenderness, not displacing a word except with reluctance.”

At length the fateful day, May 17, 1881, arrived. There was a tremendous rush for copies. The streets in the neighbourhood of the publishing house in London were blocked from early dawn till late in the afternoon, by a long procession of wagons, waiting their turn to be laden with their bales of Testaments for the provinces. A similar crush could have been seen at each of the great Termini.

“I was in England,” wrote the late John Horden,³ Missionary Bishop of the distant Diocese of Moosonee on the lonely shores of Hudson’s Bay, “when the Revised New Testament was issued from the press. The greatest imaginable interest was taken therein; and, on the day of its issue, copies might be seen in the hands of a great number of people, rich and poor alike; many of whom, unable to wait until they reached their homes, were reading as they hurried along the street.”

Glancing across the ocean to America on the following Friday (May 20)—which was the day of publication there—we perceive the exciting scenes enacted in the neighbourhood of the London publishing house three days before to have been repro-

² *The Revision of the N. T.* (Hodges, Dublin), p. 6.

³ *Charge*, 1887, p. 10 (London, Seeley & Co.).

duced with even more piquancy. As the *New York Herald* (May 21) said ⁴ :—

“ It was certainly an unaccustomed if not an unprecedented sight which was witnessed in Wall Street yesterday morning, when a half-dozen enterprising street venders appeared, carrying trays loaded with small and neatly-bound volumes, and shouting, ‘ Bibles, only a quarter ! ’ ‘ The Revised New Testament for only twenty-five cents ! ’ The pedlers, who were mostly active young men, were apparently very successful. The sidewalk merchant who first took his stand at the corner of Wall and Broad Streets was speedily surrounded by a crowd. Passers-by stopped first to investigate and then to invest ; and scores of brokers and bankers, young clerks and Stock Exchange operators, were seen to walk away with a copy of the book in their hands or bulging from their pockets.”

The New York Tribune also (May 21) announced :—

“ The sales of the Revised Testament yesterday exceeded 300,000 copies.”

The Independent (N. Y.) for May 26 says :—

“ ‘ Here’s yer New Testament, jist out,’ is the cry of the newsboy on the street. This is the first time in the history of the world that the Holy Scriptures were sold in this way. . . . Everywhere—on the cars, on the ferry-boats, and in other public conveyances and places—attentive readers of the revised book are to be seen ; and the most frequent question, when two friends meet, is, ‘ Have you seen the New Testament ? How do you like it ? ’ ”

We are also told of several daily papers, not only in the Capital but in other cities, that reproduced the whole New Testament, having gone to the great expense of receiving it over the wires. The *Tribune*

⁴ For these quotations from the press of America I am indebted to Dr Schaff’s *Companion*.

of Chicago, which was one of these, employed for the purpose ninety-two compositors and five correctors, and the whole work was completed in twelve hours. The *Times* of Chicago says of its own issue, "Such a publication as this is entirely without precedent." The *American Bookseller* of June 1 announced that a large number of publishers and electrotypers were showing the greatest enterprise in the production of reprints in a variety of shapes and sizes.

On the day of publication the work was formally presented to the Upper House of the Southern Convocation by Bishop Ellicott, where its reception was extremely frigid. The tone of Ellicott's speech ⁵ was distinctly apologetic, and more especially when he began to skate over the extremely thin ice of the amount of change which he and his colleagues had introduced. This, he admitted, had been *between four and five times as much as he had prophesied eleven years before*, when urging the experiment upon Convocation; but he asked the House to accept his assurance that none of these changes had been made hastily or precipitately,⁶ and that they had been so skilfully assimilated to the general diction of the Authorised Version that, numerous and thorough though they were, their "effect to the general hearer or reader will really hardly be perceptible." Another notable utterance of the bishop was that there had been in the prosecution of the work "*ceaseless differences of opinion and countless divisions*," show-

⁵ See *The Times*, May 18, 1881; also the *Historical Account*, p. 18.

⁶ Which means that his estimate eleven years before had been made "hastily and precipitately!"

ing that the volume as published was the resultant of divergent forces, a fact which, though only too familiar to those who had been in the secret,⁷ had not been apprehended hitherto by the general public, or perhaps even by the members of the Upper House themselves, only one other of whom (the Bishop of Salisbury) had been a participator in the actual work. After some rather colourless remarks by the Primate (Tait), the Bishop of London (Jackson) concluded the discussion by alluding to what he called "the proposed alterations," warned the clergy to suspend their judgment for the present, and wound up by declaring that the new work, however valuable—

"DID NOT SUPERSEDE that version of the Scriptures which all English-speaking Christians had learnt to esteem and love." A remark which was greeted by the Bishops with cries of 'Hear, hear.'

On the same day the principal metropolitan newspapers had leading articles about the Revision, some of which were very well informed indeed. Of the two which appeared in *The Times*, the first was plainly the work of a Reviser, because written with exact knowledge of circumstances which had oc-

⁷ See above, pp. 50, 51, for letters of Hort and Westcott. Humphrey says (*A Word on the R. V.*, p. 21), "Each of us, times without number, has been outvoted by a 'tyrant majority.'" Moberly says (*Charge*, 1882, p. 18), "The Version as it stands does not exhibit the real judgment of any of the Revisers. Each one was, many times, outvoted in points which he greatly valued." Vaughan says (*Authorized or Revised*, p. x), "A man of sense and a man of modesty learns to defer to the decisions of a majority, with something better than a sullen or reluctant acquiescence."

curred in the Jerusalem Chamber.⁸ There was a breezy optimism in the tone of that article which predicted that there would be at first "much criticism of a very precipitate nature," which would "not affect" the fortunes of the Revision "in the slightest degree." The other article was less laudatory, and, in fact, is still worthy of being consulted, for its very acute and in some respects damaging criticisms. I may quote one sentence:—

"A multitude of little changes of this kind, while bringing no appreciable benefit in point of accuracy, arouse a general sense of unfamiliarness, and may give an uncomfortable feeling, if not something more, to the ordinary reader, and particularly to the ordinary hearer. They are pedantic peculiarities of scholarship which will not promote the prospects of the version."

For three or four days after this (May 18 to 21) there was a kind of lull. The air was charged with electricity. The public were evidently busy examining the book for themselves, and the only question which by a kind of unconscious irony was agitated in *The Times*, was as to whether the clergy would find themselves debarred from reading the Church lessons from the new Revision by any really legal and operative authorisation of the old version. In that debate the Lord Chancellor (Selborne) and the Bishop of Lincoln (Christopher Wordsworth) strongly upheld the exclusive authority of the Version of 1611, and denied any liberty at all to the clergy in the matter.⁹

Then arose from the sea a little cloud of criticism

⁸ See above, p. 36, and *Historical Account*, p. 15.

⁹ See a discussion of this question by the Rev. Randall T. Davidson (now Primate) in *Macmillan's Magazine*, Oct., 1881.

like a man's hand, soon to gather force and develop into a hurricane of terrific intensity.

Canon Cook, editor of the *Speaker's Commentary*, led off with a protest against "the Evil One" in the *Lord's Prayer*; this was in the form of a public letter to the Bishop of London, dated May 21. Dr. Westcott, preaching on the following day (May 22), spoke of "the sharp controversies which had already begun."¹⁰ But Bishop Lightfoot, preaching at Jar-row more than a month later (June 29), said that "if the Revisers were surprised at all by the public criticisms on their work, it was by their mildness, not by their harshness."¹¹

Mr. Gladstone, the Prime Minister, pronounced DECIDEDLY AGAINST THE AUTHORISATION of the new Version on May 26.¹²

But the unkindest cut of all was an article in the *Nineteenth Century* for June 1 by Dr. George Vance Smith, the identical individual for whom the sponsors for the Revision had borne so many hard knocks and sacrificed no little prestige. He embraced this earliest opportunity of rushing into print against the Revision, and wrote that the book contained "NO SMALL AMOUNT OF ELABORATE OVER-CORRECTION," that "a great proportion" of "the great mass of little changes" was "uncalled for"; that they "broke in upon the old familiar music of the Authorised Version without any gain of sense by

¹⁰ *Lessons from Work*, p. 148.

¹¹ Quoted by Davidson, *Macmillan's Mag.*, Oct., 1881.

¹² "Mr. Gladstone talked mainly of the new 'Revised Version,' to the use of which in place of the old he was much opposed." Francis Turner Palgrave, *Journals*, p. 166.

way of compensation," and that they "went some way, if not to justify, at least to illustrate the doubts and fears of those who were against revision."

Meanwhile the circulation of the Revision went on apace, so that a writer ¹³ on June 1, exactly a fortnight after publication, could say :—

"When we hear that two million copies of the book have been circulated, we must come to the conclusion that there is hardly a hamlet in the United Kingdom where it has not made its appearance." In truth "it was found in cheap editions at every bookstall." ¹⁴

The next criticism of any particular importance was in the July number of the *Contemporary Review*, from the pen of Dr. (afterwards Bishop) J. J. S. Perowne, Editor of the *Cambridge Bible for Schools*, and himself an Old Testament Reviser. While praising many of the new renderings, this article must be taken as condemnatory on the whole, because it attacks some of the fundamental principles of the Revision, such as "the rendering of one Greek word uniformly by one English word," "uncouth literalism," and "inversion of the natural order of words in English"; the first "is mere pedantry," ¹⁵ and is the surest way to destroy all freedom and all dignity of language"; the second perpetually reminds the reader "that he is reading a translation";

¹³ J. A. Giles, D.C.L., *The Evil One*, p. 5. (Reeves & Turner, 196, Strand.)

¹⁴ J. B. Lightfoot, *Charge*, 1882, p. 79.

¹⁵ One of the Revisers (David Brown) says :—"The work was half finished ere the conviction had grown upon some of us, that by adhering to that principle too rigidly we were making bad English." *The Expository Times*, vol. v., 64.

and the third is "construing rather than translating." We also learn incidentally from this writer that "much adverse criticism" had already "been lavished on the Revisers," and that their change of the Lord's Prayer had been "generally and decisively condemned."

It was now the turn of the Revisers, and Prebendary Humphrey replied to Dean Perowne in an address delivered before a Clerical Conference at Piccadilly on July 7, and published a few days afterwards by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. Anything coming from a member of the now famous Company was eagerly welcomed, and indeed Mr. Humphrey's booklet is still very interesting reading. He cited a number of improvements, which was the usual, but not logically convincing,¹⁶ method adopted by Revisers in commending or defending their work; and, while in a general way admitting its necessary imperfections as being the result of a compromise, added: "I do desire and greatly long to read it, just as it is, to my people in church." He contended that the Company had carried out the endeavour "sparingly and reverently to amend" the Authorised Version, while at the same time "sensible that no revision short of one that should thoroughly test every word of the existing version,

¹⁶ The logical fallacy of the Revisers consisted in arguing that because "some A is better than some B," therefore "all A is better than all B." This is equivalent to contending that because a large number of excellent stones can be enumerated in a public building, therefore the building itself as a whole is well designed, and completely adapted for its purpose. Prebendary Humphrey himself admits the futility of such reasoning (*A Word on the R.V.*) p. 19. It is obvious that this argument could be retorted.

and of the Greek text from which that version is translated, would satisfy the scholars who were conversant with the original, or would for any long time content the people at large." Still he said that neither he nor any of his colleagues was "able to stand up for" every one of the changes which had been made. "Some of them I thought at the time unnecessary, and opposed without success." As to the change in the Lord's Prayer, "I resisted it" [says Mr. Humphrey] "as long as I could," but afterwards "very reluctantly joined the large majority in its favour." He admitted that there were "some things in this Revised Version which might have been better done, and some things which might better have been left undone," but hoped that the "prejudice" against it "in the minds of a few honest irreconcilables" would ultimately disappear, and that even they in time would "relax their frowns."¹⁷

There was another interesting defence of the Revision in *The Times* of July 20 from the pen of the gifted Dean Stanley, to which a pathetic interest attaches, as it appeared only a few hours after his death, and in the very same issue of the paper which contained an eloquent and touching *encomium* on him by Ellicott in the Upper House of Convocation. Stanley, in that voice from the other world, dwelt on the history leading up to "the birth of this new experiment," and admitted that—

"there must be signs of fluctuation consequent on the *variable character of the numbers usually present*";

¹⁷ *A Word on the R.V. of the N.T.*, pp. 43, 5, 6, 21, 24, 9.

yet gave numerous instances of improvements in rendering, and held that—

“ the general flow of the Sacred Narrative escapes any changes which, except by microscopic survey, could affect a cursory perusal.”

He concluded with the prediction that—

“ IF the present version should win a general acceptance, it will in its turn supersede the old ; first in private houses, and then by public reading in church ” ;

and that—

“ by the Nonconformists it will be accepted as a substitute for the older version, in all probability after a faint struggle.”

In a pamphlet entitled *Seven Chapters of the Revision of 1881 Revised*,¹⁸ by the Rev. S. C. Malan, D.D., July 28, 1881, the learned writer charged the Revisers with having “ looked upon ” their work “ in the light of a Greek exercise,” and with having “ taken pleasure in making as many changes as they could, with little or no regard for cadence, rhythm, style, or even grammar.” He pronounced the result to be “ little short of a great failure.”

Later on in the summer two very interesting volumes by Revisers, Dr. Newth on *Bible Revision*, and Dr. Roberts, a *Companion to the Revised Version*, appeared. Newth’s volume must ever remain valuable on account of his detailed description of the actual work as it went on in the Jerusalem Chamber, and more especially as it has been endorsed by other Revisers, including the Chairman himself, as authori-

¹⁸ Hatchards, Piccadilly, pp. iv. 85.

tative. Roberts, on the other hand, says nothing about the history or routine of the Revision, but discusses the principal changes in a very readable fashion. Neither of these books enters in any way into the controversy as to the merits or demerits of the Revision.

The first episcopal charge which I have found dealing with the subject is that of Bishop Campbell of Bangor (August, 1881),¹⁹ in which he says that he knows of no translation of the Greek text so accurate as the Revised Version ; and that EVEN IF IT DOES NOT TAKE THE PLACE of the one which preceded it in the public services of the Church, it will be an invaluable help to those who are not well acquainted with the original in their private reading. He adds that for his own part he shall gladly do what in him lies to promote the work.

In the same month of August Mr. Andrew Carter, in *The Story of the New Testament*,²⁰ takes a less favourable view, writing as follows :—

“ It is to be regretted that the force of the necessary alterations should have been weakened by slighter and scarcely needful modifications, which are apt to irritate, as intrusions upon the sacred words which cling to us, sweet with memories of early home-life, and recall to us those earliest lessons of devotion learned at a mother’s knee.”

In the August and September numbers of the *Expositor*, that excellent scholar and commentator, Dr. Joseph Agar Beet, writing as a Greek Testament specialist, discusses the new rendering of Greek

¹⁹ Rivingtons.

²⁰ Whittaker & Co., p. 109.

words and grammatical forms. In his luminous and informing articles he says that "the New Version is attacked all round,"²¹ but that, so far as lexicography is concerned, it is "an unspeakable gain to all who read English," and "is on the whole as good as we could fairly expect";²² but that to form a reliable estimate of the grammatical element of the Revisers' work is exceedingly difficult, inasmuch as "the New Version presents predominant excellences strangely associated with unaccountable defects."²³ He thinks that "the chief failure of the Revisers seems to be in their use of their own language as an instrument for reproducing the sense which the writers of the New Testament intended their words to convey." Still he admits that "their successes far exceed their failures."²⁴

The month of September is, however, chiefly notable in the history of this criticism for the production (Sept. 14) of the (I had almost said, in spite of its brevity) *monumental* work of the veteran scholar, Dr. Frederick Field, the editor of Origen's *Hexapla* and Chrysostom's *Commentaries*, and himself an Old Testament Reviser. He modestly called it *Otium Norvicense, pars tertia*, and even more modestly refrained from publishing or advertising it;²⁵ so that this valuable and delightful volume only gradually came to be known by any except his won intimate friends, and the specialists to whom

²¹ *Expositor*, Second Series, ii. 92.

²² *Ibid.* 109.

²³ " 205.

²⁴ " 217.

²⁵ Printed at Oxford by E. Pickard Hall & J. H. Stacy.

he presented it. When known, however, it made a profound impression, and it continues to this day a real contribution to Biblical science, and perhaps the greatest of all the books written on either side of the Revision-controversy.²⁶ In 155 closely printed quarto pages the author discussed a very large number of passages, going *seriatim* through the Greek Testament, and distributing praise and blame very fairly. But it is with his Preface that we are now concerned. In it he remarked on the large amount which had been written in approval or depreciation of the Revised Version, in the three or four months which had elapsed since the memorable May 17, and that it had "drawn down upon the devoted heads" of its authors "a hail of criticism." That there had been "strong marks of dissatisfaction with certain unlooked for and (it might be thought) uncalled for innovations" which "jar upon the ear": and that the Revisers, in pursuance of their aim of *faithfulness*, had been charged with throwing "over the general style an air of pedantry and punctiliousness which could not but be distasteful to the reader who had been nourished up in the plain, homely, and idiomatic English of the men of 1611." Dr. Field, as a member of the Old Testament Company, interpreted FAITHFULNESS, as "faithfulness to the sense and spirit of the original," and not to its "grammatical and etymological proprieties." So that he differed *toto coelo* from Lightfoot, Westcott, Moulton, etc.

Another Old Testament Reviser, Dr. Alfred Ollivant, Bishop of Llandaff, dealt with the subject in

²⁶ A new edition is now in the market.

Public Opinion of September 17, but I have not been able to see this criticism.

The *Charge* of Dr. Charles Wordsworth, Bishop of St. Andrews, was delivered on September 30, and that distinguished Reviser made no effort to conceal his disappointment with the result achieved. We have already noticed his attitude towards the work of his colleagues.

About the same time Dr. William Alexander, Bishop of Derry, and now the revered and beloved Primate of All Ireland, observed in a *Charge* that "he was convinced that the Revision, with all its undeniable merits, must be somewhat extensively revised." This *obiter dictum* was naturally reported in the newspapers, and attracted the attention due to anything proceeding from its illustrious author. It was afterwards quoted in the *Church Quarterly Review*, but the Primate himself has never republished the *Charge*, and now looks upon it as having been a mere "ephemeral" utterance. It had its influence at the time, nevertheless.

September also witnessed a spirited defence of the Revisers with regard to the Lord's Prayer, in three letters to *The Guardian*, by one of the most solid of their body, Bishop Lightfoot; and a reply by Canon F. C. Cook in the same journal, with a rejoinder later on by the Bishop. As the introduction of "the Evil One" was the most unpopular of all the 36,000 changes which had been made, and as Lightfoot himself was responsible for it,²⁷ this correspondence

²⁷ Humphrey says, *A Word*, p. 25: "A paper was circulated amongst us by one of our body," etc. This was Lightfoot. See J. H. Lupton's article on ENGLISH VERSIONS in *Hastings' Dict.*, extra vol.

has become part of the necessary literature of the subject.

October contributed some remarkable criticisms. Foremost among these was the opening article in the *Quarterly Review* by John William Burgon, Dean of Chichester. Its style was regrettable, while its learning was profound. In this and the two succeeding numbers of the *Review*, Burgon wounded the Revisers deeply, spoke of them as if they had been almost imbeciles, and gave them no credit for any of the improvements which they had made. A less stinging style and a little fairness would have been more effective in the long run. As a specimen of controversial invective, this series of articles (since republished under the name of *The Revision Revised*)²⁸ is unsurpassed; but they had the immediate and unfortunate result of casting other less amusing but more edifying criticisms too much into the shade, and of making it appear that all opposition to the new Revision proceeded from sheer undiluted prejudice. At the same time, it is only just to protest against the insinuation of envy which was, by way of reprisal, made against Dean Burgon, by some who thought it a sufficient answer to shout "Hugh Broughton" at him! As a matter of fact he was a most saintly man, tenderly attached to his English Bible, and far superior in critical learning to all but a few of the Revisers themselves.

On October 7 there was a public discussion on the Revised Version at the Newcastle Church Congress. Speakers of the first magnitude took part in it. Edwin Palmer, one of the most thorough-going of

²⁸ London, John Murray, 1883.

the Revisers, opened the debate with a paper on "The Claims of the Revised Version of the New Testament to general acceptance." He said that it had been the aim of himself and his colleagues to revise both the Greek text and the English translation thoroughly, and that they had "examined again and again every verse from end to end of the volume," with a view to putting "the English reader as far as possible on a level with the Greek reader." That they had done this "fearlessly," and "without a thought of the judgment which this or that man, or set of men, might pass on its execution": yet that, in thus striving for completeness, he "did not doubt that they had pushed their efforts beyond the limits of public expectation." The only other Reviser who spoke was J. B. Lightfoot, who unreservedly commended the work, and maintained that TOO GREAT DELAY IN DECIDING THE QUESTION OF AUTHORISATION WOULD BE A REAL EVIL. E. H. Plumptre spoke on the same side; while W. Sanday of Oxford, and T. S. Evans, the witty Greek Professor of Durham University, did not fail to represent the opposition, the former cautiously, the latter with less uncertain sound. Dr. Sanday expressed his "regret that there had not been a little more time for the principles" of Westcott and Hort to be "thoroughly ventilated, discussed, and sifted," though he did not himself doubt their general soundness: he feared that even on the score of grammatical accuracy many adverse criticisms were well founded, and that "in the attempt to place the English reader in the same position as the Greek scholar" too much had been done, with the result

that "the greatest and most sacred of English Classics had lost something of the dignity and beauty, the ease and naturalness of its style." Dr. Evans, in the few moments at his disposal, touched with a needle *some serious errors of Greek grammar*, which he afterwards elaborated in a criticism which must presently come under our notice.²⁹

The next important event in our bibliographical history is the address which Bishop Christopher Wordsworth, the editor of a once famous edition of the Greek Testament, delivered at his Diocesan Conference at Lincoln on October 21.³⁰ He gives a long list of *censuræ*, into a discussion of which my present historical plan does not lead me, and concludes by proposing two questions :—

1. "Whether with these numerous petty changes, which would keep us in a perpetual fidget in our churches, where we most desire to be at peace, we should do well to allow the Revised Version to supplant the Authorised Translation of the Bible, which has sounded in the ears of our forefathers for 270 years ?

2. "Whether the Church of England could consistently accept a version in which 36,000 changes have been made, not a fiftieth of which can be shown to be needed or even desirable ?"

This address contained two rather telling illustrations : one in which Wordsworth likens the transition from the Authorised to the Revised Version to that from a well-hung carriage rolling smoothly and pleasantly along a properly macadamised public road, to a springless cart jolting along a rough country lane ; and the other in which he compares

²⁹ See below, p. 106.

³⁰ Published separately at the time.

the vast multitude of little irritating corrections to a swarm of minute and venomous insects, which annoy their victim all the more because they are so small.

An episcopal utterance on the other side was delivered by Bishop Woodford, of Ely, at his visitations in September and October.³¹ He recommended the Version heartily to his clergy as likely to be productive of much good, though he considered it *INEXPEDIENT THAT THEY SHOULD BE IN HASTE TO USE IT IN PUBLIC WORSHIP.*

A more weighty pronouncement was the charge delivered by the Archbishop of Dublin in November.³² Trench was the only English specialist amongst the Revisers ; he had also had experience as a translator of the plays of Calderon, and he had for many years studied as an expert the whole question of New Testament Revision. In this charge, however, he felt himself at liberty to speak with entire freedom, his attendances in the Jerusalem Chamber having been comparatively few, and having been altogether suspended for some years, as the result of a severe accident. While praising the work as an eminently courageous and honest attempt, he “DOUBTS THAT IT WILL EVER SUPERSEDE THE AUTHORISED VERSION.” He thinks that “the not unfrequent sacrifice of grace and ease to the rigorous requirements of a literal accuracy has been pushed to a faulty excess,” and that “the demands made by the Revisers from time to time on the English language prove more than it can

³¹ Macmillan, 1881.

³² Dublin, Hodges, Figgis & Co., 1881.

bear even in the most dexterous and accomplished hands." That the only Archbishop amongst the Revisers should have used such terms in speaking of the result achieved, must have been like a douche of cold water to the enthusiasts for the supersession of the Old Bible.

On November 26 Canon F. C. Cook's *Second Letter to the Bishop of London* was written. It is an exhaustive treatise of 107 pages ³³ against the translation "deliver us from the Evil One," which, as we have seen, had been defended in *The Guardian* by Lightfoot on the ground of fidelity. Cook endeavours to bring the controversy back to the instructions laid down by Convocation, and contends that the alteration of such an important phrase should not have been made on any grounds short of necessity; and his whole pamphlet is an elaborate plea that no such necessity could be proved to have existed, and that the Revisers had therefore acted *ultra vires* in tampering with what was not a "plain and clear error" of the Authorised Version. It is obvious that this contention is quite true in this particular instance, but if upheld by public opinion it would have cut at the root of many thousands of other alterations. However, it looked uncommonly like crying over spilt milk.

Another *critique* belonging to 1881 was that of Edward Byron Nicholson, afterwards Librarian of the Bodleian, "*Our New New Testament*." ³⁴ He went *seriatim* through St. Matthew, pointing out a multitude of debatable changes, and contending

³³ London, John Murray, 1882.

³⁴ Rivingtons, 1881.

that, if even one quarter of his criticisms were just, the book OUGHT NOT TO BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT FURTHER REVISION. The most valuable *item* which this writer contributed was his argument against the Revisers' handling of aorists and perfects.

We now come to January, 1882, when J. W. Burgon's second broadside was fired off in the *Quarterly*, and the first of T. S. Evans' articles appeared in the *Expositor*. Enough has been said already about the former writer; but the latter requires much more than a passing notice. We have already seen him at the Newcastle Church Congress squeezing in a few trenchant words at the end of the debate; but, in this series of four articles, he goes thoroughly and leisurely into the matter, exhibiting a master's hand. I greatly regret that these articles have never been re-published in book form, though I offered to do this many years ago, because I have learned to rank them with Field's *Otium Norvicense*, as the cream of all the literature called into being by the revision controversy. Evans deals exclusively with questions of Greek grammar, in which domain he had scarcely an equal, and certainly no superior. He is a bright and vivacious writer, and his criticisms are like delicate rapier thrusts. It would be impossible to read them and still maintain the impeccability of the Revisers in point of Greek scholarship. To quote from them, however, in the space at my command, would only spoil their effect, they are so artistically perfect.

About this time almost every clerical union in the kingdom must have had a discussion on the Revision. On February 6, 1882, H. H. Dickinson

Dean of the Chapel Royal, read a very clever paper before the Dublin Clerical Association,³⁵ in which he cited multitudes of passages which had been improved, but regretted that the Revision had been "marred by excess." One of his illustrations is worth rescuing from oblivion :—

" 'Remember, sir,' a friend of mine said to his little boy when translating Virgil one day with an appalling literalism—'remember, sir, you're translating *poetry*.' 'But it's not poetry when I translate it,' the boy made answer ; and with much truth ! "

A short time after the publication of the January numbers of the *Quarterly* and the *Expositor*, two very valuable books appeared, one by a Reviser, the celebrated Benjamin Hall Kennedy, Canon of Ely, and Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge ; the other by Sir Edmund Beckett, afterwards Lord Grimthorpe. Each of these works deserves a separate mention. I will take the great Professor's first. It consists of three sermons and as many appendices, together with a dedication to his colleague Prebendary Scrivener.³⁶ Kennedy says that the work is "at this moment . . . subject to a storm of criticism," but that "it may be laid down as an undeniable truth" that it "represents a Greek text incomparably more pure and nearer to the original than that on which the Authorised Version is founded" ; and that in accuracy of translation no scholar can doubt that the Revised is beyond all comparison superior to the Authorised. He gives

³⁵ It was printed as a pamphlet, with no publisher's name.

³⁶ *Ely Lectures on the Revised Version* (Bentley, 1882).

many instances in support of these views ; but that he is not a thick and thin supporter of the New Version is evident, from his suggestion that the Revising Company should be invited to meet again after the interval of a year, for the purpose of reviewing their work, in the light of such criticisms as might have been made during that period.³⁷ Such a sensible and rational suggestion, made by one of the most eminent of all the Revisers, does not, however, appear to have been seriously entertained by his colleagues ; nor was it, perhaps, even feasible. As the copyright of the work belonged to the Universities, it was impossible, from a business point of view, to treat the version as a merely tentative venture ; but if the Revisers had been in the same position as their American colleagues, and had been free from commercial entanglements, retaining full power over their work, the case would have been different.

Turning to Sir Edmund Beckett's book,³⁸ we find a detailed examination of the changes made in three portions of the New Testament, and a sweeping and fairly lively and interesting condemnation of the work as a whole. The eminent writer made full use of his forensic ability, but no effort at all to be judicial. The good points of the Revision were completely ignored, and public attention was exclusively riveted on its three weakest aspects—(1) transgression of the limits imposed by Convocation, (2) work of supererogation in recasting the Greek text, and

³⁷ See above, p. 80.

³⁸ *Should the Revised N.T. be authorised ?* (John Murray, 1882).

(3) superabundance of correction of the English in non-essentials.

To Burgon's and Beckett's heavy bombardment no timely reply was made from the Revisers' entrenchments, and it looked for the moment as if their artillery was outclassed. Dr. F. W. Farrar, afterwards Dean of Canterbury, did what he could in a somewhat loud article in the *Contemporary Review* for March ; but that contribution was of no intrinsic worth, merely resolving itself into a personal attack on the *Quarterly Reviewer*. It is valuable, however, as a sidelight on the general dissatisfaction :—

“ *The attacks made upon the Revised Version have been so numerous and so severe, etc.*” . . . “ The Revisers will not be in the least surprised, nor at all hurt, by the chorus of animadversion and the burst of ingratitude and abuse with which their work has been received.”

Farrar's principal plea in favour of the Revision was that it had proceeded from a very learned collection of scholars (assuming of course that they had been unanimous) ; and taking his stand on the analogy of the Version of 1611, which had been in like manner attacked by Hugh Broughton, he predicted “ an easy victory ” for the Version of 1881. He was immediately paid back in his own coin by Sir Edmund Beckett in a sarcastic brochure.³⁹

A more dignified defence was now published in pamphlet form by “ Two Revisers.”⁴⁰ It was semi-

³⁹ *A Reply to Dr. Farrar's Answer* (John Murray, 1882).

⁴⁰ *The Revisers and the Greek Text of the N.T.* (Macmillan, 1882).

official,⁴¹ and dealt altogether with the controversy concerning the Greek text. The writers (Bishop Ellicott and Archdeacon Palmer) furnished a kind of *résumé* of the textual system of Westcott and Hort, to which they had practically given their complete adhesion; and they may at all events be congratulated on having succeeded in expounding that system in language intelligible to the general public. This eminently sane and sensible pamphlet was intended to cut the ground from under Burgon's *Quarterly* articles of October and January, by showing that he had not grasped Westcott and Hort's system; but, awkwardly enough, just on the very eve of its publication, Burgon came out in the April *Quarterly* with an even more racy article than his former ones, dealing specifically with that very system, analysing it pitilessly, and anticipating many of the points on which the "Two Revisers" relied, and the controversial laurels, whatever may have been their value, remained therefore with the Dean.

We now turn to the *Expositor* for April, where Dr. Sanday concluded his series of criticisms, which he had begun in the preceding July. In the July, October, November and December articles⁴² this accomplished scholar had minutely examined the Greek text adopted by the Revisers, and had given it a general meed of approbation. He had done likewise in the December number of the *Contemporary Review*. But his April article in the *Expositor* was on the entirely different subject of the

⁴¹ The phrase is Schaff's.

⁴² Second Series, ii., 11, 241, 372, 401.

English style ; and here he brought in an unfavourable verdict, which, although far better balanced than Dean Burgon's, and more judicial than Sir Edmund Beckett's, remained practically unnoticed in the subsequent history of this controversy, by reason of its having lain buried in the pages of a merely clerical magazine. Yet in truth it is a masterly production, and quite the best thing I have seen on the English aspect of the question. Sanday starts with the very shrewd observation that the two competing theories of translation, the literal and the elegant, were at that date, roughly speaking, represented by the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford respectively, and that as Cambridge had a large preponderance of members on the New Testament Company (thirteen as against five of Oxford), so the Revised Version leaned more to the side of exact literalism than to that of polished style.⁴³

Further on he says : —

“ There is another kind of truth besides verbal accuracy ; there is a truth of feeling, a truth of effect ; and this I cannot but think that the Revisers have too much left out of sight. The Authorised Version owed its birth to the grandest epoch in the history of the English people. Great thoughts and great emotions filled the air. There was an outburst of poetry such as had never been seen before and has not been seen since ; and while men's minds were steeped in poetry they were also steeped in religion. . . . Even that which was in name prose felt the poetic afflatus in every line ; and with this poetic afflatus another, no less mighty, was combined . . . the afflatus of faith. Is it not a perilous undertaking to correct work done under such conditions ? . . . Was this the age to remould that which had once come warm from

⁴³ Second Series, iii., 249-68.

the pens of martyrs, the living product of the best years of English religion ? . . .

“The department in which the poetic sense would especially make itself felt is that of rhythm and the choice of words ; and, strange to say, a number of writers and speakers have treated these as matters of quite subordinate, not to say insignificant, moment. If the Bible were a manual of science or philosophy, I should agree with this estimate. But the Bible has little to do with science or philosophy ; nor yet is it, as it used to be thought, a mere storehouse of cut and dried dogmas. It is the book of religion ; and of religion not stereotyped in formal phrase, but tingling with a rich and powerful life from end to end. The Bible is the book of religion, and its object is to touch and stir the hearts of men. For this end rhythm and the choice of words are far from being unimportant. They may just make all the difference between a thought falling flat and dead, and the same thought striking a spark and kindling a flame.”

On May 2, C. J. Vaughan, Master of the Temple and Dean of Llandaff, completed his not at all uninteresting contribution to the literature of this subject, in the shape of a volume of *Sermons* entitled *Authorized or Revised?*⁴⁴ Anything coming from this elegant scholar and pious thinker, who had also been a very regular and diligent member of the Company, deserves respect. But, in its bearing on the controversy which was raging, the book was of but slight importance, as it dealt with only a few of the improvements made by the Revisers, and pronounced no definite judgment, or even opinion, on the work as a whole. Indeed Vaughan rather studiously avoided doing so. He says he regards the question of authorisation “as one for which the

⁴⁴ Macmillan.

public mind is not yet ripe." That the book "is on its trial as a whole." That he hopes "no partial or eclectic treatment of it will be attempted"; and that the only alternatives are on the one hand authoritative introduction into congregational use, or on the other "re-revision under such management as may be through trustworthy for so difficult and delicate a task."

Some notice may be taken of a slight brochure ⁴⁵ of Dr. Vance Smith about this time, in which he contested the oft-repeated assurance that no doctrine of the orthodox faith had been in any degree modified by the Revision; and remarked on the change which the Revisers had made in Titus ii. 13. ⁴⁶

"The long-descended Authorised therefore, being on the ground, ought to have been left unchanged, and probably it would have been so left by revisers not so strongly under the influence of a foregone conclusion."

It may be well also to catalogue Mr. George Washington Moon's articles in *Public Opinion*, which were afterwards re-issued in book form. They are mostly of a trivial character, too often descending to cheap ridicule of the Revisers.

I also include in my sketch of the first year's criticism Canon F. C. Cook's *Revised Version of the First Three Gospels*, which was published some time in 1882. The writer had already, in a notice prefixed to the third volume of the *Speaker's Commentary*, expressed his surprise at the "Striking Omission" whereby the Preface to the Revised Version

⁴⁵ *Revised Texts and Margins* (British and Foreign Unitarian Association Lond., 1882).

⁴⁶ p. 42.

had made no mention of that work, though why he should have expected such a notice is not apparent. He had also, as we have seen, entered largely into the controversy about the Lord's Prayer. His book on the *Revised Version of the First Three Gospels* is chiefly textual, and contains an elaborate defence of the *textus receptus* against the Revisers' treatment of it; a most valuable discussion of the Eusebian Recension, to which he believes B and Aleph belonged; and, in general, an attack on Westcott and Hort's theories. His work is of permanent value, and must be taken into account in any future discussion of textual questions. Except incidentally it does not touch on the English style of the Revision, merely saying that the changes "have produced a strong and a very general impression, which certainly is the reverse of favourable." ⁴⁷

Last comes a most important work in favour of the Revision—Prebendary Humphrey's *Commentary*.⁴⁸ As might have been expected from so capable a classical⁴⁹ and biblical⁵⁰ scholar, and so conscientious and assiduous a Reviser,⁵¹ it is a most entertaining and illuminating study, and is likely to be always regarded as the best defence of the Revised Version published by any of its authors. I hold that no one ought to pronounce a final judgment on the Revised Version until he has mastered

⁴⁷ p. 3.

⁴⁸ *A Commentary on the R.V.* (Cassell, 1882).

⁴⁹ See the *Dict. of National Biography*.

⁵⁰ See his *Commentary on the Acts*.

⁵¹ He attended 385 times out of a possible 407.

this Commentary. On an average about ten notes are found on each of its 474 pages, which gives a total of about 4,740 ; and in nearly all these cases *the superiority of the Revised Version is demonstrated*. Prebendary Humphrey had read both Field's and Evans' criticisms, and his *Introduction* is characterised by great modesty, which makes it more valuable than some other defences written subsequently in a more confident strain. He says :—

“ The Revised Version is intended not only for ‘ the hearing of the ear,’ but for study and meditation ; and one who gains from it a better insight into the sense of the Scriptures will be content to forego any sweet cadences and felicitous phrases which give an untrue or imperfect representation of the sacred text ; moreover, he will generally find that his ear becomes in time as well accustomed to the new rhythm as it was to that which has been displaced.”

CHAPTER VII

LATER OPINIONS

HAVING given above what I believe to be a fairly full catalogue of the first year's criticisms on this side of the Atlantic, I do not aim at a like comprehensiveness as to the years that followed. Such a proceeding would be too laborious, and indeed beyond the power of any one living in a country rectory. Besides, most of the criticisms fall within the limits of the first year. But some publications of a later date claim attention, and must be noticed. Although many articles were written in magazines and periodicals, not many separate volumes of importance appeared during the fourteen years after the close of our last chapter.

First comes a *Complete Concordance to the Revised Version* ¹ by J. A. Thoms (August, 1882). This useful and accurate work was published under the authorisation of Oxford and Cambridge Universities, and embraces the marginal readings of the English Revisers, as well as those of the American Committee. The Preface remarks that :—

“ Among the many noble monuments of learning and piety by which the present age will be distinguished in future years, the Revised Version of the Holy Scriptures will doubtless occupy the foremost place, and prove the most valuable to mankind.”

¹ London, W. H. Allen & Co.

Next I notice a *Critical Commentary on the Revised Version* ² by W. A. Osborne, who had been collecting materials on the New Testament for nearly forty years. He at first experienced great delight in perusing the result of the Revisers' labours, being struck "with the greater accuracy of the text and the wonderful fidelity of many of the renderings." Nevertheless he felt that it was marred by "inaccuracies" and "inconsistencies," which "told of the absence of the one master mind, which should have moulded discordant counsels into an harmonious whole": and that one missed "the glorious cadences of poetry in prose," which had been impressed by the genius of Tyndale on the older version. He also regretted that no opportunity had been afforded for the reception of criticisms from the outside public, according to the plan wisely adopted by the German revisers of Luther's Bible.

The *Charge* ³ of the Bishop of Salisbury (Dr. Moberly) is of equal interest with that delivered the former year by the Archbishop of Dublin. Both Prelates were infrequent in their attendance in the Jerusalem Chamber; both wished to resign, but were overruled by their colleagues; and both were entirely absent from the later meetings of the Company. Moberly however, unlike Trench, regarded himself as responsible not less than those who continued the work to the end, for all the leading methods adopted. He considered the determining of the Greek text in the nature of the case absolutely indispensable, though at the same time he had "studiously refrained for the most part from voting

² Kegan Paul, Trench & Co.

³ Rivingtons, August, 1882.

upon these changes of text at all." He believed *the Company to have been* "too large for any sustained uniformity of judgment either in reading or rendering." He acknowledges that the Revised Version contains "many changes which might without serious inconvenience have been omitted": yet he thinks that "it would have been much to be regretted if slight inaccuracies had been allowed to disfigure" the work. While in the habit of reading from the Revised Version in his private Chapel, he did "NOT WISH IT TO TAKE THE PLACE OF THE VERSION OF 1611 IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE OF THE CHURCH," but recommended it strongly for use in private families and for personal study; and he ventured to predict that even the rhythm of the English would be found not unmusical, when it had become familiar.

In the following December the Bishop of Durham (Dr. Lightfoot) delivered his primary *Charge*,⁴ in which he said that the paramount claim of the Revised Version to the respect of future generations would be the restitution of a more ancient and purer text. He deprecated the idea that the Revisers had been "led blindfold" by Westcott and Hort. He let in some important light on the textual procedure, by saying that "in the earlier stages the debated readings would naturally provoke more discussion, but gradually the accumulation of separate examples would furnish a storehouse of experience, and the inductions thus gained would furnish principles for future guidance which would materially abridge the later debates." Something of the

⁴ Macmillan

same kind has already been cited from Ellicott as well as from Hort. On the question of English style, Lightfoot urged that "the verdict of the present generation could not be unprejudiced"; because "the ear which had been accustomed to one rhythm in a well-known passage would not tolerate another, though it might be as good or better"; and prophesied that time only could arbitrate fairly.

The *Charge* ⁵ of the Bishop of Worcester (Dr. Phillpott) was delivered in June, 1883. He says that "few who are sufficiently conversant with such questions . . . would be content that authority should be given to substitute the Revised Version instead of the Authorized Version for use in our Churches": and that he and others "miss in many passages of the translation that accurate knowledge of both the Greek and English languages which, rejecting the mere literal translation of one word by another, seizes the idiom and spirit of both languages at once, and conveys to the English reader the very meaning which the words of the original were intended to convey to the Greek reader of the sacred volume." ⁶ He thought the version "a valuable, and, in many respects, trustworthy commentary"; but alluded to the fact that the Revisers had "drifted very far away" from their instructions.

In his *Inaugural Lecture* ⁷ as Ireland Professor at Oxford, Dr. Sanday eulogises the *Speaker's Commentary* on 1st Corinthians by Dr. T. S. Evans, and says:—

⁵ Rivingtons.

⁶ p. 16.

⁷ Parker.

"It is much to be regretted that the Revision Committee had not this Commentary before them, as it might have saved them from some rather serious errors." ⁸

The third edition of Scrivener's *Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament* came out in the summer of 1883, and it takes full account of Westcott and Hort's theories. Scrivener, as has been already stated, dissents *in toto* from these, holding that they have their foundations "laid on the sandy ground of ingenious conjecture"; but, while he admits that the Cambridge Professors "had a real influence" in the deliberations of the Revision Company, he thinks that "a comparison of their text with that adopted by the Revisionists might easily have shown" that the influence was "by no means a preponderating one." ⁹ It is noteworthy however that Scrivener, in thus writing about the *text*, says nothing about the *margin* of the Revised Version. The truth is, that, mainly through his own vigilance, entrance into the *text* of the Revised Version was denied to many of Westcott and Hort's readings, and that these had, as it were, to take a back seat in the *margin*. So that if we regard the margin as distinct and separable from the body of the work—as being in fact *an asylum for rejected readings*—and contemplate its elimination from the Revised Version in the future, we can understand the drift of Dr. Scrivener's evidently carefully balanced words.

In his twelfth chapter he gives us a series of critical discussions on some controverted passages,

⁸ p. 48.

⁹ 4th ed. vol. ii. p. 284, note.

and it is from the instances recorded in that chapter and in the appendix to the tenth chapter that we can best learn *the manner in which the critical battle in the Jerusalem Chamber surged to and fro between Scrivener and his antagonists*. A full knowledge of Dr. Scrivener's third edition is therefore a necessary equipment for one who would rightly appreciate the true questions at issue.

Dean Burgon republished his three scathing articles, with much additional matter, in 1883, under the name of *The Revision Revised*.¹⁰ The book in this permanent form is quite a mine of material, but in too acutely controversial a shape to be attractive to the impartial student. Yet even he must go a portion of the way with the Dean in holding the Revision to be "the most astonishing, as well as the most calamitous literary blunder of the age."¹¹ The original publication of these articles had caused no little apprehension amongst the Revisers, several of whom were urgent that they should be formally answered;¹² but this was never done, as the majority appear to have been under the impression that it was safer not to do anything to advertise them further, and that their evil effect would blow over in time.¹³ It was also a usual con-

¹⁰ Murray. ¹¹ Preface, p. xi.

¹² See above, p. 79, note 37.

¹³ Others, like Westcott, "could never be persuaded to treat Dean Burgon's criticisms seriously." This may have been because Burgon in a pamphlet, published in 1872, *An Unitarian Reviser of Our Authorised Version intolerable*, announced that the continued inclusion of Dr. Vance Smith "in the end *must (sic)* prove fatal to the general acceptance of the proposed Revision." His mind was

troversial device to cite the precedent of Hugh Broughton and the Revision of 1611, thus leaving it to be inferred that the cases were on all fours : and some even went so far as to imply that the *Quarterly Reviewer's* hostility arose from the same motive as that attributed to Broughton, viz. pique at having been left off the Revision Company. But it is never safe to impute motives. Bishops Lightfoot, Moberly, Westcott and Ellicott, and Dean Bickersteth, who were amongst those who cited the parallel of Hugh Broughton, did not however indulge in any such personal insinuation.

The same year, 1883, witnessed the publication of Dr. Philip Schaff's *Companion*, a chatty and vivacious manual on all things concerning New Testament Revision. Its fourth edition was issued in 1903. The writer, as Chairman of the American Company, was intimately acquainted with all the details of the subject, and his judgment seems very fair and impartial. He does not indulge in excessive laudation of the work, nor does he confidently predict its success, as if it were the only possible alternative to the Authorised Version. After describing the enthusiasm with which it was first received in New York he proceeds :—

“ It is proper to add that after this immense rush the sale of the University editions and of all American editions fell off rapidly, and a reaction took place in favour of the old version.”

therefore made up nine years before he had read a line of the book ! Westcott's biographer, however, has not improved his work by printing some doggrel on the Dean (*Life*, i. 404).

He also says ¹⁴ :—

“The first and the prevailing impression was one of disappointment and disapproval, especially in England. . . . In the meantime, however, the Revision has been steadily gaining ground among scholars and thoughtful laymen who take the trouble to compare the rival versions with the Greek original. . . . Upon the whole, the Revision is more popular in America than in England, although it is more an English work. . . . It will certainly be used more and more in public and private as the highest standard of accuracy and fidelity, until it shall be superseded by a better one at some future generation. It would be well to revise the Bible every fifty years, and thus to renew its youth. . . . If approved, the Revision will gradually supersede the old version ; if rejected, it will still remain a most important help for the private use of ministers and Bible readers, and be made the basis of some future revision.¹⁵ . . . Their revision will be modified and improved at some future day, but the foundation will stand and out-last the critics.” ¹⁶

Dr. Schaff, in the course of his work, is himself occasionally a severe critic of the English Revisers,¹⁷ strongly preferring (as indeed most impartial out-

¹⁴ pp. 411, 412, 414, 415, 417.

¹⁵ p. 490.

¹⁶ p. 477.

¹⁷ For instance :—

Luke ii. 14. “The Revised Version is not wholly satisfactory.”

Acts xvii. 22. “Paul was too much of a gentleman and had too much good sense to begin his address to the Athenian philosophers with an insult rather than a *captatio benevolentiae*.”

2 Pet. i. 7. “Intolerable.”

John xvii. 24. “Perhaps the most objectionable rendering in the whole book.”

Matt. xiii. 37–39, and 1 Cor. xii. 8–10. “The repetition of the little *δέ* does not offend the Greek ear, while the repetition of *and* offends the English ear, unless it is emphatic, which is not the case in these two instances.”

siders have done) the readings found in the American Appendix.

I should also mention his notes on the bibliography of the subject (pp. 371-79) which are very useful.

The only contribution of the year 1884 which I have to notice is a *Lecture*¹⁸ delivered by Dean Bickersteth, one of the most regular attendants in the Jerusalem Chamber. He looks forward to the speedy completion and publication of the Revised Old Testament, and hopes—

“that then a Revised Bible will be accessible to all English-speaking Christians, which in due time, with God’s blessing, may form the basis of a new Authorized Bible.”¹⁹

And he further remarks :—

“If I were asked what is likely to be the future of the Revised Version, I should feel some difficulty in answering. The least that can be said of it is that it is confessedly one of the best Commentaries on the New Testament, and a most important contribution towards a new Version. Perhaps the best thing that could happen would be this : that after the Revised Version of the Old Testament shall have made its appearance, the whole revised Bible should be submitted to a small, competent and impartial body of men, thoroughly appreciating the merits and excellences of both the Authorized Version and the Revised, who might introduce every needful alteration and every manifest improvement into the Authorized Version, and so give it back to us with all its own intrinsic merits, and with none of its blemishes or errors.”²⁰

¹⁸ On December 30, 1884, at Lichfield. ¹⁹ p. 5.

²⁰ p. 28, quoted already, p. 80.

This must strike the reader as a very lame and impotent conclusion for such an eminent and assiduous member of the Company to arrive at. But his even more eminent colleague, Professor Kennedy, had done precisely the same more than two years previously, as we have seen already.²¹ Evidently criticism had done its work on the minds of some at least of the Revisers.

The Revised Version of the Old Testament was published in April, 1885, and henceforth, for about a dozen years, very little in the way of important criticism on the New Testament saw the light, with the exception of Westcott's articles in the *Expositor* for 1887.²² The attention of scholars and of the general public naturally shifted to the earlier and larger portion of the Sacred Volume, *the merits of whose Revised Version soon won universal admiration*. All "luxury of emendation" was perceived to have been "eschewed"; and doubtless "the chorus of animadversion, and burst of ingratitude and abuse" which had greeted the result of the labours of the New Testament Company had had a salutary effect upon their brethren of the Old Testament. The Preface to the Revised Version of the Old Testament is comparatively short, and is also put together in much better English²³ than that of the Revised New Testament. There is neither apology nor controversy. The whole thing is a business-like explanation of how the Revisers had strictly carried out their instructions, and therefore incidentally, and by implication, it gives the

²¹ See above, p. 80. ²² See Third Series, vols. v. and vi.

²³ See above, pp. 82, 83.

New Testament Revisers an ugly rap over the knuckles, which they certainly deserved, for their neglect to secure uniformity of action between the Companies. The proof of this remark will appear on a careful comparison of the two Prefaces.

It is a matter for very serious regret that the owners of the copyright neglected to publish the Revised Old Testament separately. This would have been only commercially just to the purchasers of the New Testament, not all of whom were so much enamoured of it as to want to buy it over again; and it would have been the strictly logical course to pursue, inasmuch as (in defiance of precedent) they had already published the Revised New Testament separately. But if the Revised *New* Testament was worthy of appearing separately, why not the Revised *Old* Testament? Besides, which is the really important point, it would have been fairer to the Old Testament Revisers themselves to publish the splendid work which they had achieved after fifteen years of labour, without bracketting it with quite another class of work, done on diametrically opposite principles, by a different set of men, and which had already been adversely received by the critics and discounted in the estimation of the public. Certainly, it was rather a hard fate that the Old Testament Revision should be born into the world under such very discouraging circumstances.

To return, however, to the New Testament Revision. On February 23, 1892, the Bishop of Wakefield (Dr. Walsham How) moved, in an interesting speech in the Upper House of the Convocation of York :—

“That his Grace the President be humbly requested to appoint a joint Committee of both Houses, with power to co-operate with any Committee which may be appointed for the same purpose by the Convocation of Canterbury, to consider and report :—Whether certain of the more important amendments in the Revised Version of the translation of the New Testament might be selected and recommended by Convocation for adoption in the reading of the Lessons in the Church Service.”²⁴

This was withdrawn, after being strenuously opposed by Westcott (then Bishop of Durham),²⁵ who clearly perceived that the passing of such a motion would prove a serious menace to the chances of the Revised Version as a whole. He deprecated the idea that the Revised New Testament had been a failure, saying : “The acceptance which it has received has been beyond my expectation” ; and : “I am content to appeal to the next generation for a just judgment” on it.²⁶ That was practically what Lightfoot had said ten years previously in his *Charge*, but in 1892 it was getting a trifle monotonous.

The arguments used by Dr. How in the York Convocation were afterwards elaborated by him in an article in the *Expositor* for October, 1892, in which he testifies that the Revised Version “has forfeited its first popularity, and is now comparatively neglected,” and charges the New Testament Company with having “largely exceeded their instructions,” and with a failure to “adhere to the principles they were commissioned to follow.”

²⁴ See Westcott, *Lessons from Work* (1901).

²⁵ p. 165.

²⁶ p. 172.

The keynote of his article is thus expressed: "It saddens me to think that a work so eagerly anticipated and so warmly welcomed should have already lost so much of popular interest and have so greatly declined in popular use." In the December number of the same magazine, Bishop Ellicott, as former Chairman, endeavoured to rebut How's "grave impeachment"; but the whole controversy turns on the exact connotation which each bishop saw in the term "faithfulness," which is ambiguous.

Westcott was confessedly in later times the most doughty champion of the Revisers. We have just noticed his speech in the York Convocation, but he had previously contributed a very fine and illuminating set of articles to the *Expositor* for 1887, which have been already mentioned in passing, and which were republished in 1897 under the title, *Some Lessons of the Revised Version of the New Testament*. It would be hard to find a more informing volume, or one placing the Revisers in a more favourable light. The preface and the introductory chapter are the only portions which will provoke disagreement, while the 200 pages which follow, closely packed as they are with matter, taken in connexion with the accurate index, are worthy of ranking with Humphrey's *Commentary*, and furnish a wealth of material for the proper understanding of the intricate subject of translating the Greek Testament, such as might have been expected from a theological teacher of Westcott's eminence and insight. At the same time, it is certain that Westcott fails in his effort to lead his readers to perceive "that most of the popular

objections which are brought against the Revision are either altogether groundless or outweighed by corresponding gains." Where he succeeds is in showing that *many* of them are groundless, and that there are *many* gains; but what proportion these latter may bear to the sum total of 36,000 alterations I have not computed. No one ever doubted that the Revised Version contained thousands of alterations for the better, indeed Humphrey had shown that long ago; but critics of equal eminence and sobriety with its authors, such as Cook, Field, Evans, Beet, Sanday, and Christopher Wordsworth (not to mention the fiercer class of pamphleteers) had pointed out a very large number of serious defects and errors; and even some of the most learned of the Revisers themselves, such as Trench, Charles Wordsworth, Moberly, Roberts, and even Bickersteth and Kennedy, had written of it in such a way as to indicate to even the least careful reader their conviction of its unfitness to supersede the older version. An attitude of sublime inattention and indifference to the other side of the controversy²⁷ was not therefore what any champion of the Revision, however confident of his ground, should have adopted. The public had, it is true, forgotten much of the adverse criticism, but scholars had not, and it is to scholars and not to the public that a full defence of the Revision must be addressed, if ever such a work is attempted.

Bishop Westcott's trumpet gives no uncertain sound when he speaks of the merits of the Revised

²⁷ See his Speech in York Convocation, also his *Life* by his son Arthur, vol. i. p. 404.

Version. He has not a single word of apology for failure in any respect, except that he thinks Revision sometimes did go far enough.²⁸ Apparently he held that no translation could have the vivid colour of its original, yet other competent judges hold the opposite opinion, and some even go so far as to think the Authorised Version to be in some places superior in style to the original Greek.²⁹ On two points in connexion with the procedure of the Revision he gives us interesting information; first, that "they heard in the Jerusalem Chamber all the arguments against their conclusions which they have heard since";³⁰ and, secondly, that "it very rarely happened that a strong opinion, even of a small minority, failed to obtain recognition in the margin."³¹

Simultaneously with this republication of Westcott's defence of the Revised Version appeared a truly merciless dissection of his and Hort's textual theories, by Dr. George Salmon, Provost of Trinity College, Dublin.³² This book caused quite a flutter of excitement amongst the scholars who had too hastily and unthinkingly adopted the fascinating

²⁸ pp. 25, 27. Compare the extracts quoted above, p. 51.

²⁹ Benjamin Jowett, as quoted below, p. 143.

³⁰ p. 3. See also Ellicott, *Addresses*, p. 100, and Hort's *Life*, ii. 242.

³¹ p. 12. See also Ellicott, p. 103, where he says of *Rom. ix. 4* that the margin expresses the judgment of a group which the Company as a whole deemed worthy of being recorded. As a matter of fact it is well known that the "group" consisted of *only two individuals*, Kennedy and Vance Smith!

³² *Some Thoughts on the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*.

but gossamer theories of the Cambridge Dons. The writer, having long been one of the foremost theologians in the world, and being perhaps superior in reasoning powers to any of the Revisers, touched weak points in those theories which he had long noticed, and the knowledge of which he did not wish to carry unspoken to his grave. He doubted the finality of Hort's work, and pleaded for "a new trial by well-qualified judges."³³ He objected to "the whole tone and method" of the two editors, as being "that of teachers instructing disciples," who in too many cases seemed to adopt the motto "Rest and be thankful!" The editors had not produced the evidence which had satisfied their own minds, and had not taken the student with them along the path that they had travelled; and when once a solution appeared to them to be probable, they somehow seemed to jump to the conclusion that it was certain. Thus they spoke of unproved hypotheses as if they were demonstrated facts, and habitually employed "question-begging nomenclature," like the word "Neutral." "Names," says Dr. Salmon, "will not alter facts, though they may enable us to shut our eyes to them."³⁴ Speaking of the Hortian theory of a Syrian recension, he thinks it was hit upon by "scientific divination," and was only "a probable hypothesis," which Hort had been obliged to "shore up" by a new hypothesis, that the Peshitto was a revised form of the Curetonian Syriac.³⁵ On the "voluntary poverty" of Dr. Hort, in his disregard of vast masses of docu-

³³ pp. 33, 36, 42.³⁴ p. 52.³⁵ p. 74.

mentary evidence, the Provost quaintly remarks³⁶:—

“ I had thought of comparing this successive elimination of untrustworthy witnesses to the process by which Gideon weeded his army of the soldiers on whom he could not rely ; but even Gideon’s reduced army is too large to represent the force on which W H depend. I ought rather to have thought of the victory won by Jonathan and his armourbearer ” ;

with a sly glance at B and Aleph ! Then, alluding to Dr. Hort’s opinion, that “ it is not safe to reject B ” even where it stands alone, he remarks—

“ At present I will only say I believe it to be far too extreme a rule to lay down that in the admission of a verse into the New Testament text a single black bean shall exclude.”³⁷

He said that Hort’s method of casting aside Western readings as worthless reminded him strongly of the Irish juryman, who, after he had heard counsel on one side, decided that it only perplexed his judgment to listen to what the other side had to say ! Dr. Salmon avails himself of the recent researches of Blass and others in the Synoptic Problem, and his book therefore carries us much nearer to the present state of the problem than the *Introduction* of Westcott and Hort. On the Revised Version of the New Testament he makes two remarks³⁸ :—

“ I see no sign ” [A.D. 1897] “ that the Revised English New Testament is likely to supersede the Authorized Version, though I daresay it might have succeeded if the changes had been much fewer and more moderate ” ; and—

“ That Westcott and Hort should employ the Alexan-

³⁶ p 87.

³⁷ p. 94.

³⁸ pp. 79 and 157.

drian 'use' as their chief guide to the recovery of the original text may be quite right; but that they should refuse a place on their page to anything that has not that authority is an extreme which makes me glad that the Revised New Testament, which so closely follows their authority, has not superseded the Authorized Version in our churches. For, if it had, the result might be that things would be accounted unfit to be read in the churches of the nineteenth century which were read at Rome in the second century, during the lifetime of men who had seen members of the apostolic company who had visited their city."

Another 1897 book, but only of a slight character, is "*Which Bible to read—Revised or Authorised?*" by Frank Ballard,³⁹ who says that the Revised Version is making "steady though silent progress in popular use," though "continually ignored" and treated with "cool superciliousness" by the Church of England. This writer regards the blemishes which have been pointed out as mere "spots in the sun," and thinks that "whether it is English or not, is a small matter compared with the question whether it faithfully represents to those who do not read Greek, what they have before them who do."⁴⁰ He holds that "this wearisome talk about rhythm is akin to Nero's lute-playing when Rome was burning"; and that the perpetuation of archaisms by the continued use of the Version of 1611 "can scarcely be paralleled by the two hours' blind shouting of the Ephesian mob."⁴¹ It is to be noted, however, that most of his laudatory language is bestowed on the Old Testament portion of the work.

³⁹ Allenson, London.

⁴⁰ pp. 80-7.

⁴¹ p. 39.

On February 10, 1899, the report ⁴² of a Committee on Revision was presented to the Upper House of the Convocation of Canterbury, and the following resolution was unanimously adopted by the bishops present :—

“ That the use of the Revised Version of the Bible at the lectern in the public services of the Church, where this is desired by clergy and people, is not open to any well-founded objection, and will tend to promote a more intelligent knowledge of the Holy Scripture.” ⁴³

Thus, when a new generation of bishops had arisen, the Upper House gave its benediction, in 1899, to the Revised New Testament, which had been formally presented to it eighteen years previously.

In the General Synod of the Church of Ireland, April, 1901, Dr. J. H. Bernard, now Dean of St. Patrick's, and several others, spoke in support of a motion to give the clergy liberty to use the Revised Version, wherever they might judge it to be the better translation, always supposing that their congregations did not object; the proposer urging that to continue to read the old version where it was faulty was simply “playing with religion.” This was defeated in a thin House. It was noticeable that the advocates for the Revised Version on that occasion *based their arguments almost entirely on the acknowledged excellence of the Old Testament Revision*. There also seemed to be the lurking assumption that the Authorised and the Revised

⁴² Numbered 329, and sold by “the National Society,” but now out of print.

⁴³ Confirmed by the Lower House. See Ellicott, *Addresses*, p. 122.

Versions, as they stood, were the only two alternatives, nothing being said about a possible re-revision of the New Testament.

At the May, 1901, meeting of the House of Laymen of the Province of Canterbury the resolution already passed by the bishops and clergy was discussed, but the House would only approve of giving the clergy liberty for the "occasional employment of Lessons from the Revised Version where, in the interest of more accurate translation, it is desirable."

In October, 1901, Ellicott, Bishop of Gloucester, the venerable Chairman of the New Testament Company, published *Addresses on the Revised Version of Holy Scripture*.⁴⁴ I have already quoted from that interesting little volume, and particularly in the chapters dealing with the procedure of the Revisers. The Bishop controverts Dr. Salmon's assertion that Westcott and Hort had exercised a "predominating influence" on their colleagues in textual questions;⁴⁵ but he accepts his criticisms of Westcott and Hort's theories, with but little reservation, though, as we have seen, he had formerly written in defence of those theories.⁴⁶ He now admits that "peculiarities" and "perversities" do here and there mark their text, that in the introductory volume by Dr. Hort assumptions have been made; and that Dr. Salmon "has successfully indicated three or more particulars which must cause some arrest in our final judgment on the text of Westcott and Hort."⁴⁷

⁴⁴ S.P.C.K.

⁴⁶ See above, p. 110.

⁴⁵ p. 60.

⁴⁷ p. 75.

These are :—

(1) “too distinct a tendency to elevate probable hypotheses into the realm of established facts”; such as the “authoritative revision of the so-called Syrian text at about A.D. 350”;

(2) “the nomenclature” . . . in which particular “it does not seem possible to accept the titles of the four-fold division of these families of manuscripts which have been adopted by Westcott and Hort,” and

(3) “their continuous and studied disregard of Western authorities,” on which subject he admits that “Dr. Salmon has made out his case.”

Nevertheless, holding as he does that the Revisers' Greek text is really independent of that of Westcott and Hort, he does not allow that Dr. Salmon's criticisms have overthrown the former, and he therefore upholds it unhesitatingly; as he also upholds the principle of translating adopted by the Company, on Lightfoot's initiative.⁴⁸ In dealing in a general way with objections, he remarks among other things :—

“It has sometimes been said that it would have been better, especially in reference to the New Testament, . . . if matters connected with English and alterations of rhythm had been brought before a few of our more distinguished literary men. It may be so; though I much doubt whether in matters of English the Greek would not always have proved the dominant arbiter. In matters of rhythm it is equally doubtful whether much could have been effected by appealing to the ears of others.”⁴⁹

He also asserts (as other Revisers had done) :—

⁴⁸ p. 99.

⁴⁹ p. 32.

“No criticism ever came upon us by surprise,”⁵⁰ and thinks that a “want of considerate intelligence marks much of the criticism that has been directed against their revision.”

He holds that the old version has been—

“confessedly so altered that the general hearer would hardly ever recognize the displacement,”⁵¹

and speaks of—

“the desirableness, I might even say the duty, of using the Revised Version in the Public Services of the Church.”⁵²

As a contribution to any future history of the Revised Version, I cite Bishop Ellicott's observation, twenty years after the issue of the New Testament, that :—

“There will probably be a few churches in our diocese in which the Revised Version is used already.”⁵³

⁵⁰ p. 100.

⁵² p. 120.

⁵¹ p. 124.

⁵³ p. 125.

CHAPTER VIII

PRESENT PROSPECTS

THE preceding historical sketch may help us to form some kind of estimate as to the probability of the Revision of the New Testament ever being popular. We have seen the wonderful enthusiasm with which it was at first received. That showed that the public were not only keenly interested in the event, but also that they were only too ready to welcome the little stranger, and to fold him to their heart. But such ardour of feeling soon gave place to aversion. The Revision was universally blamed for disrespect shown to hallowed associations, for harshness, and for excess. There was a complete revulsion of feeling in the course of a few weeks. Those who were prepared to bless found themselves impelled to curse. Thus disappointment soon in turn gave place to anger. A complete reaction set in. The question now is, whether such a natural reaction could ever again be reversed, and give place to kindlier feelings? Would it not be against the natural order that there should spontaneously grow up a fresh enthusiasm for the Revised New Testament? At all events we have never been able to perceive any signs of this. Look, for instance, at the sentence with which my last chapter closes. It was written twenty years after the issue of the Revision, and by the man who of all others

could say, *Quorum pars magna fui*; yet what an anti-climax it is! That even in his own diocese, over which he had presided for about forty years, and where he was universally beloved for his excellence, there were "probably a few churches" in which the Revised Version was then used! Can we not easily imagine with what very different anticipations he had engaged in the task originally? Would he have been satisfied to engage in that task at all if he had had no higher hopes of its success? I am afraid that the venerable and beloved bishop must, in his heart of hearts, have been very much chagrined at the failure of this his *magnum opus*. At all events his almost pathetic observation was quite in harmony with what others were saying. Take, for example, Dr. Salmon's words in 1897—

"I see no sign that the Revised English New Testament is likely to supersede the Authorized Version, though I daresay it might have succeeded if the changes had been much fewer and more moderate." ¹

Moreover, in that very same year (1897) a correspondent had occasion to make some inquiries from the Oxford warehouse in London as to the demand for the Revised Version, and was informed that, so far as the New Testament was concerned, the demand might be called "dead," but that the demand for the Revised Bible as a whole was quietly but steadily increasing. Another correspondent about the same time (January 1898) wrote:—

"We have always kept a supply" [of the N.T.] "for sale, and when it first appeared there was a very con-

¹ *Some Criticism of the Text*, p. 79.

siderable demand for it. This however fell off before long, and, though the prices were much reduced by the owners of the copyright,² it did not recover itself, and now it is practically *nil* I should say."

All this coincides with what Dr. Philip Schaff, Chairman of the American Revision Committee, said in his very valuable *Companion* :—

"It is proper to add that, after this immense rush, the sale of the University editions and of all American editions fell off rapidly, and a reaction took place in favor of the old version."³

Other straws which indicate the direction of the current are to be seen in the following remarks from heterogeneous sources. Professor J. H. Lupton, in his article on *English Versions* in the extra volume of Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, says that it is "vain to suppose that a standard English Version has been already achieved." The learned Dean of Westminster (J. Armitage Robinson), in his Commentary on *Ephesians* (1903), simply ignores the Revised Version, which was made in the precincts of his own famous Abbey, except where he finds fault with particular renderings of it, which he sometimes does in his Notes, and remarks :—

"In this translation I have only departed from the Authorised Version where that Version appeared to me to fail to bring out correctly and intelligibly the meaning of the original."

Dr. W. G. Rutherford, Headmaster of Westminster, in his edition of *The Epistle to the Romans* (A.D. 1900) says :—

² For charitable distribution the owners (in 1894) offered the 1s. edition for 1½d. ; the 2s. 6d. edition for 3d. ; and the 4s. 6d. edition for 4d.

³ p. 411.

“The Greek of the New Testament may never be understood as classical Greek is understood—it contains too many alien elements—but it has at least begun to be studied from the proper point of view. Even when the Jacobean Version was revised many just conclusions gravely affecting interpretation had been established, although most of them seem to have been ignored by the revisers, who in some places actually distort the meaning in defiance of these conclusions by translating in accordance with Attic idiom phrases that convey in later Greek a wholly different sense, the sense which the earlier translators in happy ignorance had recognised that the context demanded. Since the Revised Version of the New Testament was completed, great strides have been made in the knowledge of New Testament Greek.”

Bishop E. R. Wilberforce, speaking at his Diocesan Conference, as reported in the *Guardian* for November 7, 1900, remarks that—

“He had for a long time tried the Revised Version in family devotions, and he found that he could not use it.”

No wonder therefore that a critic in the *Irish Times* of August 14, 1903, said of the work: “it has not found acceptance with the masses.” And, if we go a little nearer to the source, we find the capable and erudite writer of a Biography of Bishop Lightfoot, which appeared in the *Quarterly Review*, and was republished by Macmillan in 1894, say (p. 47):—

“We believe that if the Version is to gain general acceptance it will have to be again revised on the more conservative model of the work of the Revisers of the Old Testament.”

In 1892, Bishop Walsham How, a man of unrivalled experience as a worker amongst the ordinary folk of England, said that the Revision was “compara-

tively neglected." He could not well have said less. From all which extracts—and they could be largely reinforced—we are compelled to come to the conclusion that the work has made no real progress, and is never likely to do so. Popular favour was never enlisted on the side of the Revised Version. The circumstances of the case entirely precluded this. Every fresh examination of the book only served to bring out more clearly that it could never be judged fit to supersede the old Bible. It had never within itself the elements of success; and it would be cruel now to raise hopes that in the nature of the case could only be destined to disappointment.

It appears that the late Lord Acton asked that men should be steelled against the charm of literary beauty and talent.⁴ But, human nature being what it is, this cannot be done. Men see beauty in the works of God around them, and they require to see it also in His Word. When, therefore, we hear of "its lack of happy idioms and sweet stately music,"⁵ "its almost total absence of poetic instinct,"⁶ and that the "absence or scantiness of fine discernment both in linguistic principles and in rhythmical rendering appears to be a constitutional defect in the new translation"⁷—when it is remarked that "the pure pellucid flow of the old narratives is gone," that the Revisers have "courageously driven their ploughshare through the beautiful

⁴ *Pall Mall Mag.*, vol. xxxvi., No. 147, p. 7.

⁵ S. Cox, in *Expositor*, 2nd Series, iii., 434.

⁶ J. A. Beet, in *Expositor*, 2nd Series, iii., 385.

⁷ T. S. Evans, in *Expositor*, 2nd Series, iii., 2.

English of the Old Version,"⁸ and that "they seem to have forgotten that in a certain sense the Authorised Version is more inspired than the original,"⁹ we are quite prepared to understand why the experiment has been a failure. We are not surprised to hear Dr. Pusey say:—

"I could not read devotionally what has so many changes and uncertainties; it would be a continual distraction";¹⁰

nor one of the Revisers themselves exclaim that "the ear longs for the words to which it has been accustomed."¹¹ Nor do we wonder that such a good judge of style as Sir Stafford Northcote (Earl of Iddesleigh) pronounces that it *destroys far more than it can possibly give in exchange.*"¹²

To sum up therefore. The lapse of a quarter of a century has done very little to retrieve the unpopularity of this Version. It is still unpopular in this year 1906. So far as I can see, it will be unpopular for ages to come. No amount of apologetic writing seems to have been able to remove the dislike of the public towards it. Nor are the public satisfied that this is necessarily the only alternative to the faulty Authorised Version. They are much too logical for any reasoning of that sort. They cannot understand why the removal of "plain and clear errors" should not be just as good a policy in the case of the New Testament

⁸ W. Sanday, in *Expositor*, 2nd Series, iii., 266, 263.

⁹ B. Jowett, *Life*, by Abbott & Campbell, i., 406.

¹⁰ *Memorials of Dean Lake*, p. 251.

¹¹ A. Roberts, *Companion*, p. 46.

¹² *Life of Dean Burgon*, ii., 228.

as it has proved itself to have been in that of the Old. They still look forward to that moderate kind of Revision being carried out. Are they to look forward in vain? Are the owners of the copyright for ever to stand in the way of our having a correct and at the same time classically rhythmical and eloquent English Bible? I for one cannot believe it.



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Hemphill, Samuel, 1859-1927.
A history of the revised version of the

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...cellent judges of English prose as well as first-rate scholars, retired from participation in the undertaking. Dr. Hemphill properly draws attention to the fact that the two companies, engaged respectively on the revision of the Old and New Testament versions, worked on totally distinct principles. The one aimed at introducing as few changes as possible, whereas the alterations made by the other have been calculated to amount to no less than thirty-six thousand. That a large proportion of these were unnecessary and uncalled for was admitted by some of the revisers themselves, who let it be known that their objections to such an unrestrained licence of emendation had been arbitrarily overborne. Whatever merits the Revised New Testament may be supposed to possess, rhythm and dignity of expression cannot be reckoned amongst them, and we could point to sentences in it that are positively unreadable. Dr. Hemphill by no means

BS Hemphill, Samuel, 1859-1927.
2088 A history of the revised version of the New
H4 Testament. London, E. Stock, 1906.
144p. 20cm.

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Merivale, and several others, all of whom

